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Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

47

Helping People Succeed in Business

Five-Year Report to Parliament 1988-1993



Canada

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY
FIVE-YEAR REPORT
TO
PARLIAMENT
1988-1993



FEBRUARY 1994

C89-1/4-1993E
ISBN 0-662-21450-1

AVR 6903

MINISTER

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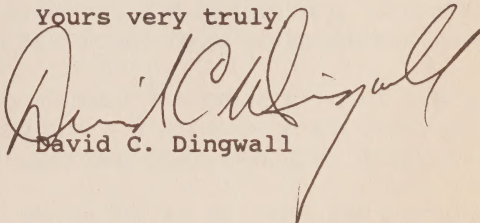
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

His Excellency
The Right Honourable Ramon John Hnatyshyn, P.C.
Governor General of Canada
Government House
Rideau Hall
1 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A1

Your Excellency:

In conformance with Sub-section 21(2) of the
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Act, I have the
honour to submit to your Excellency, and to the Parliament
of Canada, the first Five-Year Report on the Atlantic
Canada Opportunities Agency.

Yours very truly



David C. Dingwall

Attachment

Canada

FOREWORD

This document is about what the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) has helped Atlantic Canadians achieve since its inception in June 1987. By implementing locally developed approaches, ACOA and its partners have demonstrated that regional development programs do work. The initiatives supported by the Agency have helped to reduce regional disparity. For example, the current unemployment level in the region is 1% less than it would have been without the Agency's initiatives which have created over 40,000 jobs.

ACOA has focused on the development of small and medium-sized businesses, the most dynamic sector of the economy which accounts for 90% of job creation. Partnerships with local entrepreneurs, based on regional strengths and resources, are a major factor behind the high success rate of ACOA's business investments. Whereas 52% of new businesses in the Atlantic region fail within the first three years, over 90% of new businesses assisted by ACOA are successful.

One of the major objectives set for ACOA was to encourage the people of Atlantic Canada to accept greater responsibility for the region's development by creating a new partnership between the public and private sectors. Dynamic local communities are essential for economic development and it is particularly gratifying to see the initiative taken by the private sector. Hundreds of educational institutions, research institutes and business and community groups have come forward to partner with the Agency to improve the conditions in their community for development and provide support to small business. There are many examples of economic sectors where the private sector is taking charge of development.

The provincial governments have been very important development partners of ACOA. Working with the provinces, ACOA has had success in introducing a more coordinated approach to regional development while assisting them to implement their strategic priorities.

The efforts of the Agency have been built upon the activities of other federal departments in the region, including Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Canadian Heritage Canada; Environment Canada; Federal Business Development Bank; Fisheries and Oceans Canada; Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada; Human Resources Development Canada; Industry Canada; National Research Council; Natural Resources Canada; Public Works and Government Services Canada; and Transport Canada.

Like the rest of Canada, the Atlantic region must be ready to deal with international competitiveness, global trading and the opportunities opened up by freer trade. In addition, Atlantic Canadians must deal with the reality of severe structural adjustment in certain major industries, such as the groundfish fishery where ACOA and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans are currently working very closely to develop employment alternatives for those affected by fishery closures.

In today's fiercely competitive economy, successful economic development requires joint action on a region-wide level. This is particularly true in the Atlantic region because of its relatively small population and dispersed industrial base. The provincial governments in Atlantic Canada are in the vanguard of regional cooperation efforts in areas such as the elimination of trade barriers and joint procurement. As another example, ACOA, in partnership with the provinces and the private sector, is implementing a coordinated regional approach to the development of the tourism industry.

Governments, the private sector and other partners in the economic development field, including individual Atlantic Canadians, must continue to dialogue with the people of the region. Based on their advice, governments must help create the supporting environment and infrastructure, as well as a strong private sector, based on active self-reliant entrepreneurs.

The Honourable David C. Dingwall
Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

De bonnes affaires ensemble
Helping People Succeed in Business

President

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JAN 13 1994

The Honourable David C. Dingwall, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Works and Government Services
and Minister for the Atlantic Canada
Opportunities Agency
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

I have the honour to submit to you the first
Five-Year Report on the accomplishments and impact of
the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA). Sub-
section 21(2) of the ACOA Act requires that the Agency
present a report to be tabled at each House of
Parliament every five years starting in 1993.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Gusella

Attachment

Canada

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY FIVE-YEAR REPORT TO PARLIAMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose of the Report• The Case for Regional Development• The Government Agenda	
<u>CHAPTER ONE</u>	
<u>CREATION OF THE ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY</u>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why a Regional Agency?• Expectations	
<u>CHAPTER TWO</u>	
<u>MANDATE AND MISSION</u>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mandate• Mission• Strategic Priorities• Programs and Activities - Four Main Approaches• Resources• Table I: Regional Development Resource Utilization• Expectations	

	<u>Page</u>
THE ACTION PROGRAM	13
• <u>The Early Challenge</u>	
- Objective	
- Description	
- Early Response	
• <u>A Maturing Program</u>	
- Increased Focus on Small Business	
- Tighter Competition and Risk Assessment	
- Focusing on Strategic Priorities	
• <u>Evaluation of the Action Program</u>	
- Activity to March 1993	
- Price Waterhouse Findings	
(1) Increased Economic Activity	
(2) Incrementality	
(3) Level of Success	
(4) Client Satisfaction	
- Other Evaluation Findings	
(1) Impact on Competitors	
(2) Non-Profit Organizations	

	<u>Page</u>
THE COOPERATION PROGRAM	26
• <u>Description</u>	
• <u>Activities</u>	
- Newfoundland and Labrador	
- Nova Scotia	
- New Brunswick	
- Prince Edward Island	
• <u>Evaluation of the COOPERATION Program</u>	
ADVOCACY	33
• Procurement	
• Pharmaceuticals	
• Transportation	
• Trade	
• Advocacy Within the Region	
COORDINATION	38
• Regional Councils	
• Summerside	
• Fisheries	
• Canada Business Service Centres	
• Memorandum of Understanding with the National Research Council	
• Federal-Provincial Coordination	
SPECIAL PROGRAMS	43
• Fisheries Alternatives Program	
• Pan-Atlantic Development Activity	

	<u>Page</u>
<u>CHAPTER THREE</u>	
<u>BENEFITS FOR THE REGION</u>	45
REGIONAL DISPARITY	45
ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COOPERATION AND ACTION PROGRAMS	48
DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS - EXAMPLES FROM ECONOMIC SECTORS	52
• Tourism - Cape Breton	
• Nova Scotia Software Industry	
• Biotechnology - Prince Edward Island	
• Softwood Sawmill Industry - Nova Scotia	
• Salmon Aquaculture - New Brunswick	
• Food Processing - Prince Edward Island	
• Growth of High Technology Firms - Newfoundland	
• Information Technology Industry - New Brunswick	
BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR GROWTH	60
• The ACOA/Enterprise Network	
• Consult'Action Chaleur	
PROVIDING LEADERSHIP TO THE REGION	62
• Atlantic Geomatics Alliance	
• Entrepreneurship Development	

	<u>Page</u>
PARTNERSHIPS WITH UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH CENTRES	65
• Alliance with University College of Cape Breton	
• The New Brunswick Research and Productivity Council	
• Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation	
• Food Research Centre - New Brunswick	
 <u>CHAPTER FOUR</u>	
 <u>CONCLUSIONS</u>	 68
 <u>ANNEXES</u>	
 ANNEX I	 73
ANNEX II	77
ANNEX III	80

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Report

This report fulfils the requirements of Sub-section 21 (2) of the *Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Act* which requires, in part, that every five years the Minister for the Agency present to Parliament a comprehensive report on the Agency operations. The report is to provide an evaluation of the impact of ACOA's activities. This first report covers the financial commitments, expenditures and activities of the Agency from its creation in June 1987 until the end of fiscal year 1992-93.

The Case for Regional Development

The concern of this report is that of regional development policy which concentrates on measures to accelerate growth in the regions as a means of ensuring an equitable distribution of income and employment. The objective of balanced regional development has been part of national policy since Confederation. Regional policy seeks to ensure that Canada's prosperity is shared equitably among all members of society.

The notion of equity has come to be widely accepted as meaning equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is enshrined in the Constitution. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Clause 36) commits the Government of Canada and the provincial governments to, inter alia, "furthering economic development to reduce disparity in opportunities for the well-being of Canadians".

Very large differences in employment and income levels exist among provinces. The Atlantic region is confronted by the most severe long-term structural problems of any region. In 1991, access to opportunities, as measured by the proportion of the working-age population employed, was only 85% of the national average in the Atlantic region, as compared to 94% in Quebec, 104% in Ontario and 105% in Western Canada.¹

This difference in equality of opportunity persists despite very high levels of out-migration of people from the Atlantic region. Thus a concern with equity has come to mean policies which better reflect the realities of provinces and regions.

¹Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey.

The Government Agenda

The Government sees strong regional economies as the building blocks of Canada. Concerted action and the mobilization of scarce resources are necessary to achieve strong regional economies in this age of international competition and change. Economic development, if it is to be successful, must be community-based because increasingly, business investment decisions depend on the conditions in the communities in which the businesses are located. The Government is prepared to work in partnership and support community development where local creativity and initiative are shown. Regional development policies need to be adapted to the needs of communities.

CHAPTER ONE

CREATION OF THE ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

On June 6, 1987, a new page was written in the history of regional development in Atlantic Canada. The creation of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, which became commonly known as ACOA, was announced in St. John's, Newfoundland. It represented an innovative approach to dealing with the Atlantic region's economic problems and trying to break the dependency cycle by getting Atlantic Canadians to actively work on finding solutions.

A little more than six years later, few Atlantic Canadians have not heard of ACOA or have not been touched directly or indirectly by the work done by the Agency. To better appreciate the full scope of the Agency's impact through the years, we need to take a brief look at the economic and policy context in which this announcement took place.

Why a Regional Agency?

The creation of ACOA represented an initiative to decentralize decision-making in the area of regional development. A fundamental re-thinking of regional strategy, based on extensive reviews of past regional development efforts, the economic circumstances and prospects of the Atlantic region and widespread consultations within the region, indicated that the regional development challenge had evolved to where a centralized approach was no longer effective.

Several important policy reviews, notably, the Report of the Federal-Provincial Task Force on Regional Development in 1987, had pointed to a number of factors critical to successful regional development:

- Given that the economic structures and circumstances of the various regions of Canada differ, support for economic development needs to be uniquely tailored to the region if it is to be effective.
- The success of regional development programming has been related to the degree of decentralization.
- The success of a program depends critically on practical and workable design at the local level; a stronger federal presence in the region could lead to improved economic development programs.

- Major national policies and programs must, as far as possible, be tailored to respond to the unique needs of the regions.

Set against these factors, the centralized approach to regional economic development under the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion (DRIE) had resulted in the principal focus of industrial incentives programs being in Ontario and Quebec. The focus on the manufacturing sector meant that they tended to be applicable primarily in those areas with an established manufacturing base.

Even more importantly, complex and lengthy eligibility and approval procedures had made the programs largely inaccessible to Atlantic small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), less able than larger firms to absorb the application costs.

Federal-provincial agreements, the Economic and Regional Development Agreements (ERDAs), had been an important mechanism for coordinating federal and provincial programs and improving the regional sensitivity of programming. However, in 1986, a federal moratorium was placed on new agreements primarily because the centralized approach had proven ineffective in reconciling federal priorities for economic development with the unique development needs of the regions. This was most serious in the Atlantic region, as the weaker fiscal capacity of the Atlantic provinces makes them more heavily dependent on federal transfers to fund economic development.

Finally, the economic development programming of the 1960s and 1970s focused on support for social and physical infrastructure and competitiveness improvement of the resource-based sectors. These efforts added significantly to the wealth-creating capacity of the region. However, by the mid-1980s, it was apparent that the resource sectors would account for a declining share of economic activity. The keys to success in an increasingly competitive global economy lay with small business and entrepreneurial development, improved marketing and the improvement of competitiveness through the application of technology and improvements in the skill levels of management and labour. A horizontal or comprehensive approach to the problems of business and economic development in the region would become increasingly important, based on a first-hand knowledge of regional strengths and weaknesses.

The extensive consultations undertaken within the region prior to the establishment of the Agency revealed a consensus that:

- Solid and self-sustained economic development in Atlantic Canada must come from within; a new emphasis must be placed on developing the private sector and, in particular the SMEs, because of their importance for employment creation.

- The people of Atlantic Canada should be encouraged to accept greater responsibility in the planning and implementation of measures designed to promote economic development.

However, in mid-1987, while the Canadian economy was experiencing robust growth, the Atlantic economy had still not recovered from the downturn of the early 1980s. In particular, manufacturing investment was below the levels of 1982 and the unemployment rate showed no signs of declining to the levels of the early 1980s. Confidence in the economy and in particular, business confidence, was at a very low level.

Expectations

Against this background, the announcement of the creation of ACOA on June 6, 1987, set out the following expectations:

- There is no "quick-fix" solution to the problems of the region.
- Money is only a part of the solution and what is needed is to stimulate and encourage entrepreneurship.
- The Agency needs to create a better environment for growth and development, encourage risk capital and improve competitive skills.
- What is needed is a new partnership of effort between the public and private sectors focused on support to small and medium-sized businesses.
- The region needs an improved decision-making authority: fewer forms, less red tape, quicker decisions.
- The Agency will be responsible for coordinating all federal activities relating to the economic development of the region, particularly in areas of procurement, training and skills development, job creation, technology infrastructure and local investment promotion, and advocating a regional perspective in the design and application of national policies and programs.

Consistent with the need for decentralized decision-making, the Head Office of the Agency was located in the region. An Advisory Board of private sector individuals was established to advise on program design and operations. Emphasizing the need for the people of the region to become participants in development, Atlantic Canadians were challenged with the message, "the Agency belongs to you".

The creation of ACOA, and with it the decentralized regional agency approach to economic development of the regions, also reflected an important change in the focus and expectations for regional development policy. Since the early 1960s, the focus had been based on concern with reduction in disparity between regions. The new approach is designed to assist all regions to realize their economic potential.

This change in focus was based on the recognition that it was unrealistic to expect significant reductions in disparity between regions, given that the resources devoted to regional development are relatively small, generally less than 3% of total federal economic expenditures in the Atlantic region, and given the deep-seated structural problems faced by the region, in particular. Furthermore, a focus on regional disparities was not compatible with a regional development approach which had evolved from a concern with only areas of severe underdevelopment in the early 1960s, to an approach that embodied efforts to promote economic development in all regions.

Despite the fact that some modest improvements in "closing the gap" in terms of earned income per capita had, in fact, been achieved in Atlantic Canada over the previous 25 years, the usefulness of regional development programs was commonly questioned. This expressed negative view of regional development programs must be ascribed in large part to unrealistic expectations. The new approach took a broader view of regional development as a process of building the Canadian economy by focusing on maximizing growth in all regions based on their strengths with a special emphasis on regions characterized by long-term structural weakness in their economic base. As such, the major objectives set for the Agency were to remove structural barriers to growth so that the region could begin to attain its economic potential.

CHAPTER TWO

MANDATE AND MISSION

Mandate

ACOA's mandate as spelled out in *Section 12* of its legislation is:

"... to support and promote opportunity for economic development of Atlantic Canada, with particular emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises, through policy, program and project development and implementation and through advocacy of the interests of Atlantic Canada in national economic policy, program and project development and implementation".

To meet this objective, the Agency has been given two broad sets of powers:

1. To provide programs that contribute directly or indirectly to the development of small and medium-sized businesses, entrepreneurial talent and economic prosperity, as well as programs that improve the business environment in Atlantic Canada.
2. In concert with other concerned federal departments and agencies, to formulate plans and integrate federal approaches to support opportunity for economic development in Atlantic Canada.

Mission

Shortly after the creation of the Agency, consultations with Atlantic Canadians were undertaken on an unprecedented scale which allowed Atlantic Canadians to voice their expectations, the needs of the business community and help define how the Agency could best approach economic development of the Atlantic region. From these consultations, ACOA defined its mission as:

To foster, in a strategic partnership with the people of Atlantic Canada, the long-term economic development of the region through the renewal of the Atlantic entrepreneurial spirit.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic priorities, shaped by national priorities and by annual consultations with Atlantic Canadians, have been refined through the years to reflect the Agency's mandate and the national concerns of increased productivity and competitiveness in the global marketplace. The five strategic priorities which guide ACOA's programs are:

1. **Entrepreneurship Development:** to create an environment that will lead to an increase in the pool of people who have the motivation and skills to start their own businesses and to encourage appropriate community-based support.
2. **Trade and Market Development:** to focus on strengthening marketing capabilities in regional firms in order to increase their market share and expand to new markets.
3. **Innovation and Technology Transfer:** to enhance the competitiveness of Atlantic Canadian firms and support diversification through innovation, acquisition and development of new technology.
4. **Human Resource Development:** to increase competitiveness and productivity of firms by ensuring a skilled and well-trained work force and access to skills and know-how for owners of small and medium-sized businesses.
5. **Procurement and Industrial Benefits:** to obtain long-term, high quality regional industrial benefits for Atlantic industries using public sector procurement requirements and encouraging firms to meet these requirements.

Programs and Activities - Four Main Approaches

The official announcement, and subsequently the ACOA legislation, pointed to the specific means by which the Agency would realize its mandate. From these were drawn the Agency's four main areas of activity:

1. **ACTION:** Risk-sharing with entrepreneurs. Small and medium-sized businesses can obtain direct financial assistance, loan insurance and interest buy-downs for new establishments, modernization or expansion of businesses, innovation, development of new products, human resource development, business support and feasibility, marketing and business studies.

2. **COOPERATION:** The primary vehicle for joint federal-provincial undertakings, the program aims to improve the environment for economic growth in Atlantic Canada with all levels of government, the private sector and institutions.
3. **COORDINATION:** The Agency assists the Minister in carrying out the legislative mandate to coordinate the economic development policies and programs of other federal departments in Atlantic Canada.
4. **ADVOCACY:** ACOA promotes Atlantic Canada's interests in the development of national policies, programs and procurement to ensure a positive impact on the region's economic future.

The two flagship programs, Action and COOPERATION, receive a lot of public attention and recognition since they touch a much wider base of clientele. They have been well promoted and, of course, financial assistance programs attract much more attention than non-financial initiatives. But the successes of these two programs did much to establish the credibility necessary for getting results under Advocacy and Coordination.

Advocacy and Coordination have a lower public profile, as they primarily involve negotiations with other federal departments or, as is the case with procurement, involve a limited number of private sector firms. All four activities are closely integrated, as the Advocacy and Coordination activities create or influence the environment in which the financial assistance programs are implemented and take advantage of the Action and COOPERATION Programs to attract other federal departments' investment in the region.

In addition to these four central responsibilities, ACOA's activity framework includes Special Programs which cover initiatives designed to address specific circumstances that regular programming cannot meet. These include the Fisheries Alternatives Program (FAP), for which ACOA was given the implementation responsibility. An important priority of the Agency has been to promote a region-wide response to issues of concern to all provinces. The Pan-Atlantic Development Activity was introduced in 1992 to emphasize the importance of a distinct funding mechanism for this priority and to provide funding for development opportunities that cover the whole Atlantic region.

Resources

ACOA is a small Agency with full-time equivalent employment of 371 persons, in fiscal year 1992-93. In 1987, ACOA was allocated \$1.05 billion in new funding over the subsequent five-year period. In addition, \$345 million was transferred from DRIE to ACOA for existing programs [Economic and Regional Development Agreement (ERDA), General Development Agreement (GDA), Industrial and Regional Development Program (IRDP), Atlantic Enterprise Program (AEP) and Cape Breton Topping-Up Assistance (CBTUA)]. In 1989, the Government extended the funding for ACOA by a further two years, added additional funds for the COOPERATION Program, and incorporated the resources for other government department ERDAs and GDAs. As of 1990, the Agency has been placed on the same footing as any other department of government with budgets established on an annual basis.

Table I provides the funding utilization for the Agency since inception. This table includes statutory payments, as well as FAP.

CHAPTER TWO

TABLE I
ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE UTILIZATION
1987-88 TO 1993-94
\$000'S

ACTIVITY	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94 (1)	Total
DEVELOPMENT								
Action								
- Operating	3,255	10,552	12,598	11,964	13,307	12,979	12,100	76,755
- Transfer Payments	41,972	161,110	236,858	179,120	171,789	137,391	136,491	1,064,731
Sub-Total (2)	45,227	171,662	249,456	191,084	185,096	150,370	148,591	1,141,486
Cooperation (ACOA Delivered Only)								
- Operating	1,307	4,239	5,061	3,605	5,100	5,789	7,800	32,901
- Transfer Payments	29,622	37,462	41,641	49,295	50,553	52,773	88,094	349,440
Sub-Total	30,929	41,701	46,702	52,900	55,653	58,562	95,894	382,341
Special Programs								
- Operating				709	2,800	2,512	3,200	9,221
- Transfer Payments				440	16,883	34,712	25,138	77,173
Sub-Total				1,149	19,683	37,224	28,338	86,394
Advocacy & Coordination								
- Operating	790	2,563	3,060	2,913	2,813	2,570	3,400	18,109
Pan-Atlantic								
- Operating						14	100	114
- Transfer Payments							850	950
Sub-Total						14	1,050	1,064
Program Administration								
- Operating	1,926	6,243	7,454	7,859	8,077	7,750	7,500	46,809
Total - DEVELOPMENT								
- Operating	7,278	23,597	28,173	27,050	32,097	31,614	34,100	183,909
- Transfer Payments	71,594	198,572	278,499	228,855	239,225	224,876	250,673	1,492,294
Total	78,872	222,169	306,672	255,905	271,322	256,490	284,773	1,676,203

CORPORATE ADMINISTRATION

- Operating	2,858	9,266	11,063	13,137	11,814	11,900	11,900	71,938
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TOTAL AGENCY SPENDING (3)	81,730	231,435	317,735	269,042	283,136	268,390	296,673	1,748,141
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Loan Insurance Reserve		20,729	2,846	15,123	1,544	800		41,042
Transfers to OGD's for COOPERATION		6,100	32,532	67,971	94,047	117,645	100,892	419,187
Transfers to OGD's for "Other" (4)		5,324	8,390	12,360	38,079	24,548	17,783	106,464

TOTAL ACOA FUNDS UTILIZED	81,730	263,588	361,503	364,496	416,806	411,383	415,328	2,314,834
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- (1) Based on October 31, 1993 Data.
(2) This includes spending on Action Program plus business assistance programs transferred from DRIE and statutory expenditures.
(3) Includes Statutory Expenditures.
(4) These transfers to other government departments (OGDs) reflect ACOA's Coordination role. Funds are transferred to top-up OGD programs where this is deemed the best means of achieving regional development.

Expectations

The creation of ACOA generated a high level of expectation from Atlantic Canadians, the business community, the media, central agencies and from the Government itself, all of which tended to look at the new Agency as the last chance for the economic development of the region. The first step was to get Atlantic Canadians, through the consultation process or as members of the ACOA Advisory Board, to help in defining what needed to be done and how it was to be done. The business and economic communities from Atlantic Canada were invited to take an active part in this planning and development process. This was a major challenge as, at the same time, the Agency had to assume responsibilities for programs it had inherited and to build, in record time, the best team of people to do the job. Even before it was officially created (the legislation was only promulgated in September 1988), ACOA was expected to deliver and to deliver fast.

By December 1987, less than six months after its creation, the Agency was successful in having the moratorium on ERDAs lifted by proposing a process which would focus activities on the Agency's strategic priorities. Building on existing program legislation, ACOA announced a first-business assistance program, the **Action Program**, in February 1988 and, a few months after the passing of the legislation, it had most of its people in place.

Not everything went as smoothly as one would have wished, and the Agency being so much in the public eye, met with some criticism because the expectations created far exceeded the means available and the time needed to make a difference.

"Contrary to what Canadians believe, they are not the only ones spending money to stimulate development of the lagging regions, nor do they spend the most. Europeans have a history of region-specific development that goes back in some cases over half a century. American states and municipalities have engaged in intense competition for new investment since the 1930s. They still do so in the 1990s whether they are economically backward or prosperous.

ACOA programs, in fact, fit very closely with recent emphasis in regional development in much of the industrialized world, and in many respects the Action Program is the very envy of other jurisdictions. It is locally-based, is broad and flexible to allow a wide array of types of assistance, and is targeted mainly at the small and medium-sized sectors."

*Atlantic Provinces Economic Council
June 1992*

THE ACTION PROGRAM

The Early Challenge

The Action Program was the first visible activity to be implemented, as it was the most likely to provide a quick response to the high expectations created by the June 1987 announcement.

Objective

The Action Program was created to assist in the establishment of new businesses and the modernization or expansion of existing Atlantic Canadian businesses with emphasis on SMEs which create productive and long-term employment.

Its goals are to foster the development of entrepreneurship, to increase the rate of new business formation, to improve the competitiveness of SMEs, stimulate innovation, and create growth through new products and markets for businesses in the Atlantic region.

Description

The Action Program provides a comprehensive package of support covering the key needs of small and medium-sized businesses: access to technology information, advice and managerial expertise and equity financing. The Program provides the full spectrum of support for business investment from analyzing the feasibility of a new idea through to the marketing of the eventual product.

"ACOA assisted me in establishing my business. The people there worked with me along the way, being helpful not only in terms of money, but also in terms of management and business advice."

*Ross Hansen
Super Soles
Fredericton, New Brunswick
September 1992*

"At ACOA, it seems that people have flexibility and an understanding of business needs."

*Dan O'Brien, President
Seascope Systems Ltd.
St. John's, Newfoundland*

The Action Program was designed to make it as easily accessible as possible to small business. Information and evaluation requirements have been streamlined, particularly for small projects, and progress payments are available to ease the cost of financing. The Program can support a wide range of industrial sectors, especially the increasing business services sector, and offers an increased level of risk-sharing with private investors. It offers three types of financial assistance: direct contributions, contributions to interest buy-downs and loan insurance. One unique characteristic of the Program is its ability to work in partnership with non-profit business organizations and institutions to provide services to small businesses and to encourage these organizations to take responsibility for the economic development of the region.

"...Because of the support of the telephone company, and other agencies like ACOA and Communications Canada, Memorial is recognized as a leader in this country, and indeed the world, in distance communications for medical and education purposes."

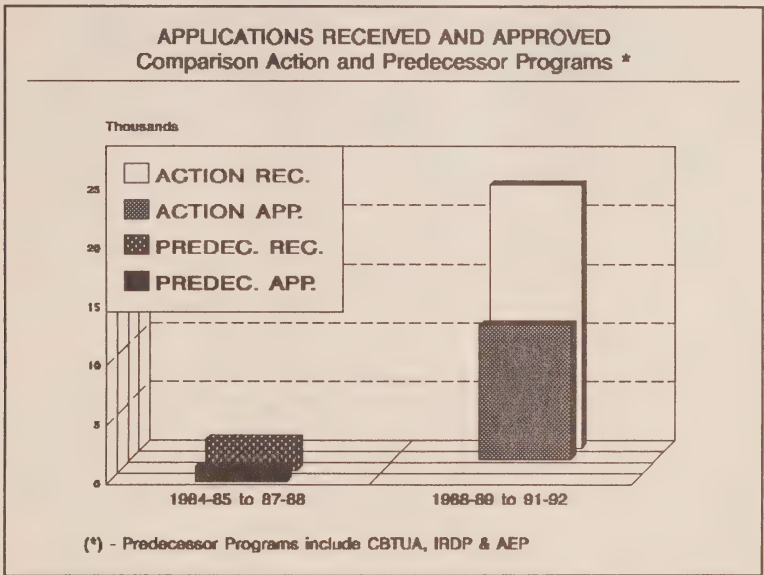
*Dr. Arthur May, President
Memorial University
St. John's, Newfoundland
December 1991*

In contrast to programs of the Agency's predecessors which were based on rigid national criteria, the Action Program provides the flexibility to adapt support to meet the needs of business. Authority is highly decentralized and well over 90% of decisions can be taken within the regional offices, allowing for quicker response time. Front-line managers have the authority to approve most small projects, empowering them to work with entrepreneurs to make viable business ideas a reality.

Early Response

The Action Program received a significant response from the business community. In its first year alone, ACOA had received a level of applications many times that received by predecessor business financial assistance programs. Exhibit 2.1 illustrates the wide difference in activity level of predecessor programs by comparing the four years of activity prior to and following inception of the Action Program. In four years, the predecessor programs received some 2,600 applications compared to over 22,000 in the first four years of the Action Program. This increase of over eight times earlier levels demonstrates that the Atlantic region really does contain a lot of business development opportunities just waiting for the right type of incentives to be given a chance to grow.

Exhibit 2.1



The response from the non-profit sector was significant, demonstrating the potential of this sector to deliver and coordinate economic development support. Over 300 business support groups and associations came forward in the first year and are now offering a wider and more professional variety of services to Atlantic businesses. One example is Technical People in Industry (TPI), an ACOA initiative managed by the Nova Scotia Research Foundation Corporation. The TPI program, by supporting the placement of university or

technical institute graduates in small and medium-sized businesses, strives to achieve two strategic results: to use and further develop the skilled human resources available in Nova Scotia and to transfer technology into the business community, resulting in more efficient and effective operations. The effectiveness of the program can be seen by the fact that for 76% of participants, the candidate has been retained after the support period.

"TPI has provided very soundly based technical support for our plant management. A new manufacturing line will help justify retaining the technical candidate's services and we are now outlining projects which should increase employment and product output."

*Sydney Hughes, President
I.M.O. Food Limited
Yarmouth, Nova Scotia
Fall 1991*

However, the non-profit sector has the potential to do much more in supporting development and providing services to small business. The Agency needs to continue to find innovative ways to enlist the support of the private sector.

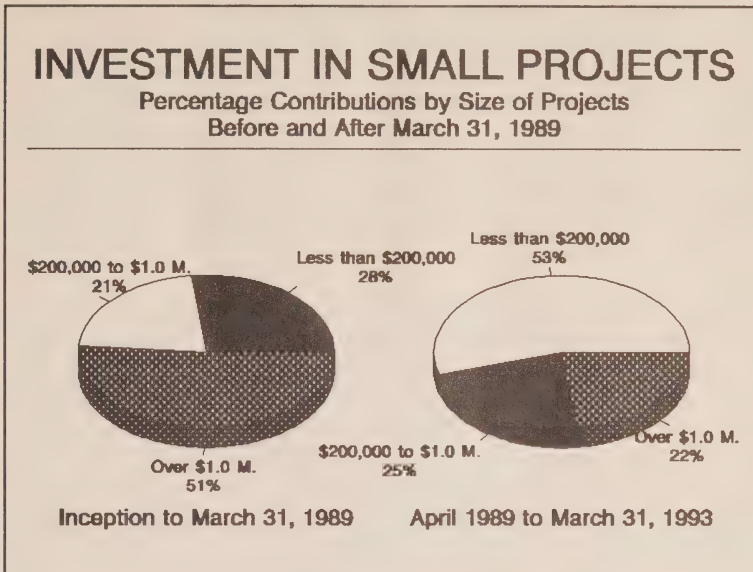
A Maturing Program

Increased Focus on Small Business

Budgetary cuts were introduced in the 1989 federal budget which affected the Agency's budget. Priorities were established and the Action Program concentrated its direct financial support to small businesses, contributions only being provided to projects of less than \$200,000. Interest buy-down and loan insurance support still remained available to larger projects usually coming from already established businesses.

After the 1989 change, over 75% of the Action Program's contributions went to projects of less than \$1 million in eligible costs, these representing 98% of the projects approved. Small and new enterprises remained a central focus of the Agency as almost 90% of the projects assisted were very small (less than \$200,000).

Exhibit 2.2



Tighter Competition and Risk Assessment

Assistance to businesses is assessed for viability and benefits to the region. This practice, which has been in place since the start of the Program, ensures that the marketplace can sustain the entrance of new competitors and that the result will be increased competitiveness and productivity in an industrial sector and not the displacement of existing businesses. Nevertheless, if it is to contribute to the federal priority of increased competitiveness, ACOA cannot back off from areas where there are competitors, regardless of how inefficient or unproductive they might be. However, the Program provides the opportunity for every business to improve its competitive position. In sectors of apparent market saturation, the Agency has financed independent studies of the industry and has discontinued assistance where it was demonstrated that the market was well-supplied and that added production capacity would not be beneficial to the region.

ACOA Account Managers follow extensive evaluation practices to determine the degree of risk by performing asset security, liquidity and performance tests. The February 1991 Report of the Enterprise Cape Breton Assessment Team made recommendations on risk management practices which were introduced to tighten the assessment practices of the Action Program and better balance risks with potential benefits. Applicants' equity is subject to closer scrutiny as are risk levels for management, markets and finance. Equity requirements for loan insurance projects have been increased. Personal guarantees are more frequently required for loan insurance projects. The monitoring and follow-up of projects have been improved and the Agency can step in to terminate projects which are not producing expected benefits.

Approximately 94% of the projects assisted by the Agency are successful (i.e., meeting the performance conditions of their contract with the Agency as of March 31, 1993), including over 90% of new businesses. On average, new businesses established by ACOA are now three years old. Data from Statistics Canada shows that almost 52% of new businesses in the Atlantic region fail within the first three years of operation.² The success rate of ACOA-funded start-ups is much higher than that of non-ACOA supported ventures. This is due in part to the fact that all proposals are thoroughly scrutinized before assistance is given and projects are subject to careful monitoring. Also, the Agency has established programs to provide professional advice and guidance to clients.

ACOA does not provide grants to businesses. It provides contributions which have strict performance conditions and which, if over \$100,000, are repayable. Repayability adds to the leverage on expenditures, as these funds once repaid can be "recycled" to support additional projects.

Focusing on Strategic Priorities

Probably one of the best features of the Action Program is its ability to adapt and respond quickly to the needs of small and medium-sized businesses facilitated by the regional location of the decision-making process. Changes are continually introduced as a result of consultations with the Atlantic business community. Through the years, the emphasis has shifted considerably from capital investments to innovation and marketing-related activity in response to the increasing need for Atlantic business to improve competitiveness to compete in the global economy, a shift that reflected national economic policy priorities and concerns.

²The estimated failure rate is for the sectors eligible under the Action Program: primary (excluding farming and fishing), manufacturing, business services, tourism and miscellaneous services.

Ministerial consultations were held on an almost yearly basis, where the business community provided its feedback and suggestions on how to improve support to businesses. As a result, new fields of activity were either introduced or given a higher profile:

1. **Supplier Development** was introduced in 1989 to increase the ability of Atlantic businesses to participate competitively and acquire public procurement contracts.
2. **Human Resource Development** was made available in 1992 to encourage Atlantic enterprises to enhance their management skills and enrich the technical skills and knowledge of their firms.
3. **Action Loan**, introduced in 1990, provides growth-oriented, high-potential enterprises with venture capital financing for selected capital and non-capital investments.
4. **Innovation**, which encourages and allows Atlantic businesses to develop new products or production processes, was enhanced in 1989 and again in 1992.

"I think that it is a credit to ACOA that our project was supported and we feel that you have made a meaningful contribution to helping enhance the reputation of software developers in Atlantic Canada. You have given us the opportunity to show that we are able to develop office automation programs that are second-to-none."

*Donald F. Fay, P.Eng., M.D.
President
Fayler Medical Office Consultant Ltd.
Halifax, Nova Scotia
1991*

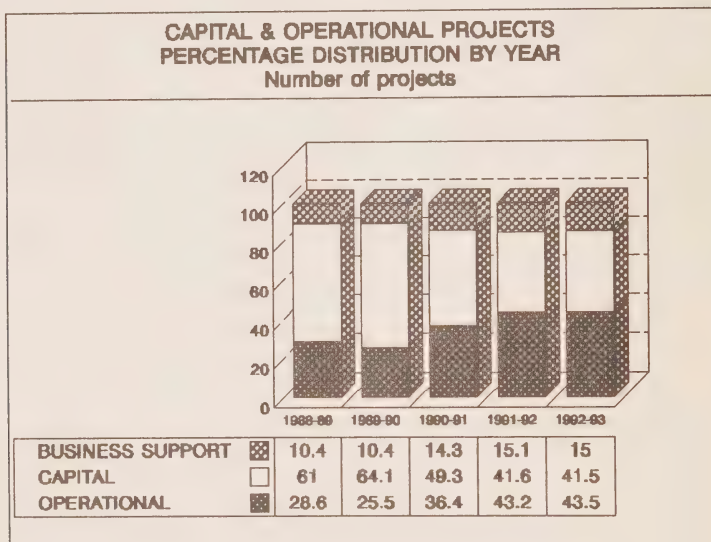
5. The **Consultant Advisory Service** was introduced to meet the serious need for professional and managerial advice to small businesses, especially to first-time entrepreneurs. The service, cost-shared between ACOA and the firm, allows the hiring of professional consultants to provide diagnostic accounts of the firm's problems or opportunities and to help the owner/manager identify appropriate measures of change.
6. The **Marketing** element was enriched in 1989, allowing small and medium-sized firms to take advantage of trade opportunities.

"ACOA's marketing program has opened a new door for us. It's been tremendous. We've increased sales by about 200 to 300 percent, and we're now in the process of shipping our products (kennels) to Bermuda."

*Lorne MacDonald, President
MacDonald Fencing
Porter's Lake, Nova Scotia*

Capital investments (establishment, expansion and modernization) still represent the largest percentage of projects and investments. However, support to operational projects and innovation and marketing activities is steadily gaining importance (Exhibit 2.3).

Exhibit 2.3



Despite the Agency's efforts, a lack of equity capital remains an important constraint facing Atlantic business. The private venture capital industry has limited presence and impact in the Atlantic region. A recent study³ for the Agency suggests that relative to the size of the economy, the availability of venture capital is less than half that for Ontario and Quebec.

The Human Resource Development Program introduced by ACOA has been used in only a very limited fashion by Atlantic business. Given the importance for competitiveness of upgrading existing employees of small business, there is a need to review the factors contributing to the lack of use of the Program and perhaps amend the Program to better meet the needs of SMEs.

The Action Program has provided broad-based support to business investment as a means of stimulating entrepreneurship. With scarce resources, consideration should be given to selective assistance for those activities most essential for competitiveness and growth such as the application of technology, marketing and training.

Evaluation of the Action Program

Activity to March 1993

From inception to March 31, 1993, ACOA had supported 10,000 projects, providing over \$800 million for a total investment of \$2.4 billion in the Atlantic region. ACOA was able to increase its leverage from 1.7:1 in the first year to 2.3:1 in 1992-1993, meaning that for every dollar contributed by the Program, an additional \$2.30 was directly invested by the private sector. Of the projects assisted, nearly 1,500 were establishments of new businesses of which 45% to 50% are estimated to be first-time entrepreneurs. Annex I provides additional detail on the type of activity supported and the type of financial assistance provided.

³Stimulating the Use of Private Sector Venture Capital Financing in Atlantic Canada - Moncton Consulting Services Ltd. - 1991.

SUMMARY OF ACTION PROGRAM ACTIVITY SINCE INCEPTION

Inception (February 1988) to March 31, 1993

# of projects approved:	10,001
Authorized assistance:	\$823.26 million
Total project cost:	\$2.4 billion
Jobs created:	26,089
Jobs maintained:	31,284

An evaluation of the Action Program was completed by Price Waterhouse⁴ in 1992, based on a comprehensive survey of clients. It recognized that the Program has been the object of constant monitoring and adjustments to adapt it to the needs of its target clientele. Specific findings for commercial operations include the following:

Price Waterhouse Findings

(1) Increased Economic Activity

Ninety-six percent (96%) of the jobs projected were effectively created at the time of the survey, and the actual number of jobs maintained was higher than originally forecasted by the applicants.

The survey reported that over 64% of clients reported increases in sales for their firms. Value of sales increases attributed to the Action Program have been estimated to fall between \$750 million and \$950 million annually. A cost-benefit analysis demonstrated that for each \$1.00 invested through the Action Program, including the expenditures on projects which subsequently failed, there were \$4.20 in direct and indirect benefits, including additional taxes and Unemployment Insurance savings.⁵

⁴Action Program Evaluation Summary Report, Price Waterhouse, November 1992.

⁵This estimate of the ratio of benefits in terms of value-added as measured by Gross Domestic Product to total investment costs, public and private should not be confused with the "leverage" ratio of 2:3:1 (page 21) which measures the direct business investment induced by \$1 of Action Program expenditure.

"If five years ago you had asked me whether our company would be in a new manufacturing plant in Canada, have an offshore manufacturing plant in Thailand and be exporting to a dozen countries around the world, I would have said "no way". Five years ago, the concept of accomplishing what we have done in internationalizing our business was not foreseen. But, we did it."

*David Ganong, President
Ganong Brothers
St. Stephen, New Brunswick
Spring, 1992*

(2) Incrementality

Only 8% of the commercial clients assisted would have been able to proceed as planned without the Action Program assistance, 49% would have either been postponed or down-sized and 43% would not have proceeded at all. The findings are supported by an internal follow-up by ACOA of projects which were denied assistance, which demonstrates that only 7% of the refused projects judged to be viable proceeded as planned without ACOA's support, and over half were cancelled. These projects were denied assistance solely because the project size exceeded \$200,000, the maximum eligible for support over the May 1989 - February 1990 period.

(3) Level of Success

Over 80% of the commercial clients surveyed reported that their investment was a success. Those who felt they were less successful than anticipated considered the prime reason to be the downturn of the economy which negatively impacted their earlier projections.

(4) Client Satisfaction

Over 85% of clients found it easy to meet ACOA's request for information in the application process. In comparison, in an evaluation of the predecessor IRDP, only 65% of clients reported finding the application process easy.⁶

⁶IRDP Evaluation Study Report, Young and Wiltshire, December 1990.

Other Evaluation Findings

(1) Impact on Competitors

A review of the impact the Action Program had on competitors was made through a case study of the assistance provided in the tourism accommodation sector.⁷ At the local level, the individual operators complained of "unfair" competition but their regional associations and other representatives of the industry lauded the Program in forcing operators to upgrade facilities, making them more competitive on the national and international scene. This conclusion supports the Agency's viewpoint that by keeping a healthy level of competition, it strongly encourages Atlantic firms to invest and increase their level of productivity, making them more prepared to compete on the global market.

"ACOA has been good for the tourism industry... ACOA has enabled us to improve the tourism plant and infrastructure on P.E.I."

*Jim Larkin
Executive Director
Tourism Industry Association of P.E.I.*

(2) Non-Profit Organizations

An internal survey of the non-profit groups assisted showed that almost 80% of the non-commercial activity projects would have been cancelled or postponed without ACOA's presence. Over 97% of the non-profit organizations assisted were satisfied with the outcome of their project. Benefits from this type of activity are an increase or improvement in the quality of business start-ups and in the quality of the organization's services and support to the business community.

⁷Impact on Competitors, Fiander-Good Associates Ltd., April 1992.

As an example, in Nova Scotia, assistance has been provided to universities to help with the operational costs associated with business development centres. The majority of these centres are providing top-quality commerce students and, in one case Master of Business Administration students, with practical experience with the challenges of operating a small business. As well, these centres are assisting the local business community by providing low cost, entry-level consulting services to businesses who cannot afford professional consultants. Two of the centres are aimed at meeting the specific needs of women and francophone entrepreneurs.

"This funding, which will support the Centre for the next four years, will let us build on our successes... It gives us the security to plan ahead, to develop further links with the business community, with university faculty and the network of services available to support small business. It is only this long-term commitment that makes this possible. We are grateful to ACOA, and to the community and business contributors for their support."

*Anne Hope, Director
St. Mary's Business Centre
Saint Mary's University, Nova Scotia
1993*

THE COOPERATION PROGRAM

Description

Since 1989, the federal and provincial governments, universities, research institutes and private businesses have been teaming up through the COOPERATION Program to reinforce Atlantic Canada's economic foundations. The COOPERATION Program is designed to operate in a complementary fashion with the Action Program. As the name implies, the COOPERATION Program is about pooling resources and uniting efforts toward a common goal - creating the kind of economic climate in which business and industry can grow in Atlantic Canada.

The COOPERATION Program creates conditions necessary so that direct assistance to business provided under the Action Program can produce maximum benefits to the economy. Federal-provincial agreements have been the primary mechanism used, but direct federal initiatives and agreements between the federal government and the private sector have also been used.

The COOPERATION Program is an important coordination vehicle for ACOA. First, ACOA involves other federal departments in the negotiation, program development, delivery, management and evaluation of federal-provincial agreements. Second, the approach allows for the leverage of funds from national programs administered by these departments.

As of March 31, 1993, there were nine federal departments implementing COOPERATION initiatives: ACOA; Agriculture Canada; Communications Canada; Environment Canada; Energy Mines and Resources Canada; Fisheries and Oceans Canada; Forestry Canada; Industry, Science and Technology Canada; and Transport Canada. Through the COOPERATION Program, federal departments build on their normal efforts to support regional development priorities with programs that are sensitive to the unique needs of the region.

The federal management of the COOPERATION Program is the responsibility of ACOA. The federal management of individual agreements is the responsibility of ACOA in conjunction with other federal departments. The federal and provincial governments cost-share multi-year agreements which coordinate the numerous economic development efforts of the two levels of government.

COOPERATION agreements are mechanisms for cultivating the region's existing assets and for producing new strengths. In other words, they enable traditional resource sectors to become more modern, productive and competitive, and allow people to seize new opportunities.

COOPERATION activity gives Atlantic Canadians the support services needed to create, strengthen and expand economic activity that is competitive on a national and international scale. That results in economic advancement and jobs for present and future generations.

Priorities are decided annually through consultations among federal Ministers, the Minister for ACOA, and provincial Premiers. Holding yearly discussions ensures that funds are available on a rolling basis for new COOPERATION agreements to be signed each year. That places the emphasis firmly on opportunities arising out of changing economic conditions.

Like all ACOA programs, the COOPERATION Program is fundamentally about fostering economic growth in the region. But the Program takes an even larger view, by looking at the needs of whole sectors. Further, the Program sets directions compatible with the requirements for growth unique to each Atlantic province, through the ERDA signed with each Province in 1984. By taking the region's diversity into account, the Program stimulates and strengthens differing local economies in ways that best suit the needs of each area's communities. Efforts are made to ensure that the programming is delivered by those with closest contact to the client, be it a provincial or federal department, or a private sector organization.

The Agency obtained an end to the moratorium on the ERDAs in December 1987, by undertaking to develop a process which would effectively direct federal-provincial activities towards the federal priorities for regional development outlined by the government at the time of the creation of the Agency. By 1989, ACOA was able to obtain the agreement of federal departments and provincial governments that federal-provincial efforts should be prioritized, developed and coordinated on agreed areas of priority. These priority areas or themes flowed from the Agency's mission statement and strategic priorities and related to entrepreneurship, innovation and technology transfer, marketing and trade development, human resource development and the environment. These five strategic areas offer Atlantic Canadians the greatest opportunity to become globally competitive and to achieve economic renewal. In recognition of the continued importance of competitive resource industries for the region, and in particular for rural areas, and the need for improvements to infrastructure, three supporting themes of resource competitiveness, rural diversification and strategic infrastructure were established.

The COOPERATION Program represents a very important funding source for public sector economic development initiatives. The relatively weak fiscal capacity of the Atlantic provinces severely limits their ability to undertake program spending.

As of March 31, 1993, a total of 86 COOPERATION initiatives had been signed for a total federal contribution of \$1.2 billion. Annex II provides a listing of these initiatives. Because these initiatives are cost-shared with the Provinces, the overall average being 60:40 federal-provincial, total investment amounts to \$2 billion. In addition to leveraging significant provincial expenditures, the COOPERATION Program provides a vehicle for enlisting the considerable expertise of provincial officials.

"... ACOA by and large has been an effective tool for economic development in Prince Edward Island... There is always room for additional dollars. We always seem to have, especially over the last couple of years, less and less money in the various rounds of agreements that ACOA signs on behalf of the federal government with the Provinces, but one of the strongest features that ACOA had was that it allowed the decision making process to stay here in the region."

*The Honourable Robert Morrissey
Minister of Economic Development
Province of Prince Edward Island
Transcript from Maritime Noon,
CBC Radio - Moncton
November 5, 1993*

Activities

Newfoundland and Labrador

The COOPERATION Program in Newfoundland has evolved from an orientation to resource sector agreements to more strategic, multi-faceted agreements enhancing the business climate. Recent COOPERATION initiatives focus on regional development imperatives in a changing economy. For example, the ACOA/Enterprise Network Agreement is establishing an electronic network to serve entrepreneurs and community development groups throughout rural Newfoundland. The Human Resource Development Agreement signals ACOA's intention to improve attitudes and capabilities towards entrepreneurship, education, science and technology. The Strategic Investment and Industrial Development Agreement positions the Agency to take a more pro-active role in attracting new investment from outside the province, and in commercializing indigenous, high-technology products.

Through the COOPERATION Program, ACOA and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador have been striving to streamline and harmonize programs and delivery mechanisms. Both levels of government are seeking to build on emerging strengths in knowledge-based industries, while facilitating the adjustment process from a resource-based economy. The COOPERATION Program has assisted Newfoundland to develop internationally competitive capabilities in both the private and institutional sectors. These strengths centre around cultural, geographic and historic capabilities and a variety of marine-related disciplines including cold ocean engineering, communications and instrumentation.

Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia currently has 14 COOPERATION agreements in place. Activities under these agreements cover a wide diversity of activity ranging from infrastructure (Highways and Halifax Harbour Clean-up) to resource sectors (Agri-Food, Fisheries, Forestry and Minerals) to technology, investment opportunities and tourism. All agreements are designed to strengthen, expand and diversify Nova Scotia's economic base.

Three of the more recent examples of the COOPERATION Program at work in Nova Scotia are: programs under the Industrial Development Opportunities Agreement to attract external direct investment; a Sustainable Economic Development Agreement that combines business and economic opportunities associated with conservation and protection of the environment; and private sector projects that encourage and assist in the development, commercialization and marketing of technical products and processes produced by Nova Scotia companies under the Technology Development Agreement.

New Brunswick

In New Brunswick, the COOPERATION Program allows ACOA to work in close cooperation with the Province in a number of areas. There are currently 14 active agreements of which five are delivered by ACOA. These agreements allow the governments to focus on a diverse range of activities in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors.

In the primary sectors, activity has been successful in significantly expanding blueberry production in the Acadian Peninsula, as well as in establishing a freezing plant in the area. The aquaculture industry has been supported by the construction of a major service centre for salmon growers.

A major initiative in human resource development is the commitment to finance the expansion now underway at the Shippagan Campus of l'Université de Moncton. Other projects include a Distance Education Development Fund to encourage the development of software packages for multi-media courses and programs, a Youth Entrepreneurship Program to introduce students to entrepreneurship as a career, and the encouragement of women in science, engineering and entrepreneurship.

The COOPERATION Program is also supporting highway improvements, tourism and strategic infrastructure such as the industrial infrastructure required for the establishment of a textile plant in Northern New Brunswick.

To foster innovation, assistance has been provided for the establishment of a commercial microwave laboratory to conduct R&D activities under contract to mining companies and other industrial concerns. As well, the Food Research Centre in Moncton will receive assistance for technology transfer initiatives.

Prince Edward Island

In Prince Edward Island, the COOPERATION Program supports efforts in agricultural development, while minimizing adverse effects on the environment. The Program is also contributing to improvements in the province's biotechnology capabilities with, for example, support for research and development into disease-testing techniques for the seed potato industry.

The Program is helping the food and fish-processing sectors to expand and prosper. For instance, support is being provided for soybean-roasting capabilities to bring new products on line for Island farmers.

The Program is supporting export marketing by assisting in the creation of a private sector trading house to provide international marketing capability to Atlantic businesses.

The Program is supporting entrepreneurship by, for example, supporting the development of an entrepreneurship program for junior and senior high school students and partnering with Junior Achievement to bring this entrepreneurship program to rural Island schools.

Finally, the Program is assisting in attracting investment to the aerospace industry in the Summerside area.

Evaluation of the COOPERATION Program

A comprehensive evaluation of the COOPERATION Program is about to be completed by the Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group.⁸ The evaluation concluded that the COOPERATION Program has resulted in a more coordinated regional approach to economic development and that the process has been improved by the creation of ACOA with its mandate to coordinate regional economic development. The evaluation report concludes that:

"the mechanism of a strong regionally-based federal agency with a mandate to coordinate economic development is necessary to address the region's challenges and changing economic circumstances. Federal-provincial relations were also stronger as a result of the implementation of the COOPERATION Program. Phrases such as 'more consultation', 'better communications', 'more cooperation' and 'effective negotiation' were used to describe this relationship. There is an increasing emphasis on reducing duplication and overlap and improving cooperation by both levels of government, and the processes whereby new initiatives are developed and undertaken by the COOPERATION program has furthered this effort".

"Well ACOA has been very effective for us. It has really helped put the other pieces in the puzzle when it came to attracting new businesses and so on..."

... One of the things we want to do is to make sure that Ottawa's objectives through ACOA and ours are the same. That we want to help small communities decide their own future and we need ways to bring money to them to help them go through that process, setting up their community development organizations and doing this process of deciding what works in what communities."

*The Honourable Ross Bragg
Minister of Economic Development, Tourism
and Culture
Province of Nova Scotia
Transcript from Maritime Noon,
CBC Radio - Moncton
November 5, 1993*

⁸COOPERATION Program Evaluation Study Report, Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group (report in progress).

The evidence is that the Program is working and is necessary. **Private sector clients were surveyed concerning the impact of the support and 83% indicated that their project was successful in accomplishing their objectives.** Clients and officials indicated that the incremental impact of the Program is substantial and that there is a need for such a program in Atlantic Canada. Of the clients surveyed, who were planning another project within the next five to ten years, about 40% of these respondents indicated that they would cancel or postpone the project in the absence of funding from the Program. Another 20% suggested that the scope, timing or location of their project would be changed. Clients generally gave high satisfaction ratings to the service they received from COOPERATION Program delivery officials. For example, on a scale of zero to ten, the Program scored 8.6 in terms of client satisfaction with overall service.

Finally, the evaluation found that ACOA's strategic themes had played an increasingly important role in the prioritization of expenditures. In 1989, the themes accounted for only 14% of total expenditures. However, by 1995, it is projected that 45% of expenditures, based on existing commitments, will be directed to the key themes which include entrepreneurship, marketing, innovation and technology transfer, the environment and human resource development. This breakdown of expenditures reflects continued support to improve the competitiveness of the resource sectors which represent the foundation of the Atlantic economy. The evaluation concluded that there is a substantial degree of cooperation among federal and provincial line departments. Testifying to this is the fact that the impact of the key strategic themes can be seen not only in the development of new agreements funded by the COOPERATION Program, but is also strongly visible at the program and project levels of individual agreements. Part of the reason for the growing influence of the themes is their compatibility with the directions the four provinces are taking in strategic economic planning and development. The evaluation found that:

"by strategically directing expenditures to the key sectors of the regional economy, the Program has been able to record an impressive impact on the economy of the region, improving competitiveness of the private sector, employment and earnings".

"ACOA has been a key player in the expansion of Prince Edward Island's infrastructure. We are most proud of the diversification and expansion of our food processing sector. The challenge facing the ACOA and the provinces is to ensure that we can continue to tailor shared funding programs to meet our objectives."

*Former Premier Joe Ghiz
October 1, 1992
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island*

ADVOCACY

An increasingly important part of ACOA's mandate is ensuring that Atlantic Canada's interests are considered in all national economic policy, programs and projects. ACOA's Advocacy initiatives are based on increasing the sensitivity and cooperation among federal departments in supporting Atlantic Canada's economic development.

In support of its Advocacy role, ACOA has endeavoured to develop a thorough understanding of the needs of regional business based on experience with several thousand business clients and continued consultations and discussions with the community. For example, in Nova Scotia, ACOA has introduced **Managers in the Community and Adopt a Board of Trade** initiatives to encourage regular contact of ACOA officers with the local area business to provide information. This also enables ACOA personnel to become aware of the issues facing various communities and community members have an appreciation of what ACOA is all about. Similar exchanges with the business community are also ongoing in the other Atlantic provinces where ACOA Account Managers regularly make themselves available to provide professional advice and guidance, while at the same time learn about the business community's needs and requirements.

"There is no question that ACOA has played a key role in Micronav's success in the Microwave Landing System Program. From the outset, its officials in Ottawa, Moncton, Halifax and Sydney have been successful in ensuring that inter-departmental decisions appropriately considered the Company's capabilities. When it would have been easy to dismiss Micronav as an out of the way upstart, ACOA was there to insist that the Company be seriously considered and provided the opportunity to perform."

*Nicholas E. Coyle, President and CEO
Micronav International Inc.
Sydney, Nova Scotia*

At the national level, ACOA is active across a full range of interdepartmental committees dealing with national policies, programs, projects and procurement. It is within these forums that ACOA advocates Atlantic interests. While achievements in Advocacy are not always as easily measurable as those of financial assistance programs, the gains in changing a policy or adapting a program or regulation to meet Atlantic needs can be significant. The following are but a few of the examples where ACOA has been active.

Procurement

A strategic focus of the Advocacy effort is found in procurement where ACOA is now represented on the federal Procurement Review Committee and the Senior Review Board and can participate in the federal government's purchasing decisions. ACOA personnel, in Ottawa and in the regions, are working closely with Atlantic companies with the potential of supplying goods or services to federal departments. For 1989-90 to 1991-92, federal procurement for all four Atlantic provinces increased significantly, as compared to the three years prior to the creation of ACOA. In fiscal year 1991-92 alone, ACOA played an important role in bringing over \$370 million in incremental federal contracts and associated industrial benefits to the region.

The establishment of COM DEV in Moncton, New Brunswick, is one result of procurement efforts. ACOA's support was crucial in obtaining an \$8.5 million Canadian Space Agency (CSA) contract to build the Measurement of Pollution in the Troposphere (MOPITT), an environment instrument payload for National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Earth Observation System. This represents the first major contract by the CSA to an Atlantic Canada-based company. For COM DEV and for Atlantic Canada, the MOPITT contract is a major cornerstone and presents a different future for the region.

"According to the company subsidiary plant's (COM DEV Atlantic) general manager, Joseph Gore, Ph.D., the commercial appeal of the hub city, the terrific selling job of the province's premier and the tremendous support of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) are what sold COM DEV's top brass... he also acknowledges that the firm 'wouldn't be in this without ACOA's support'."

*Atlantic Lifestyle Business
Vol. 4, #2, 1993*

Steelcor, of Buchans, Newfoundland, is another Atlantic Canada business that benefited from the targeted federal defence procurement efforts of the Agency. Over a two-year period, working closely with the ACOA Ottawa office and the ACOA St. John's regional office, the company has won close to \$10 million in contracted business. In 1991, Steelcor won \$2 million in contracts from General Electric on the Canadian Coastal Radar project. Another \$4 million was also awarded in 1992 by Short Brothers for DND's Blow Pipe Missile project.

"As a direct result of Steelcor's marketing and ACOA's advocacy we are now carrying out two major defense manufacturing contracts that see us exporting to the United States and Europe."

*Sean Power, President
Steelcor Industries Inc.
Buchans, Newfoundland*

While maintaining the competitive advantage of existing defence industries, ACOA also has a strategic long-term focus by introducing new technologies and building strategic alliances among Atlantic industries with larger domestic and international businesses. The result will be a competitive industrial base in the Atlantic region that is capable of winning in the global economy.

Pharmaceuticals

ACOA has advocated strongly with the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada and its membership for increased investment by its members in the region. This advocacy was undertaken not on the basis of entitlement, but rather on the basis of viable competitive opportunities in the region. ACOA successfully focused the interest of the region in pharmaceutical opportunities and also raised the interest and regional investment intentions of the pharmaceutical industry itself, especially in the area of clinical trials.

"I believe that there will be a surge of millions of dollars of investments in research because we can develop the clinical expertise that is already here in Atlantic Canada. All we need to do is marshall our collective expertise across the region and market ourselves in a coherent cooperative manner. ACOA has helped us do just that and pharmaceutical activity will definitely increase in the region as a direct result of ACOA's advocacy efforts."

*Dr. Howard Dickson
Associate Dean of Research and Planning
Dalhousie Medical School
Halifax, Nova Scotia
December 1993*

Transportation

In defence of Atlantic Canada's interests and to encourage a coordinated approach, ACOA communicates regularly with key stakeholders in the area of transportation, including provincial governments, industry associations, Transport Canada, and multiple corporations, commissions and associations. On several occasions, the Agency has advocated the need for the National Transportation Agency (NTA) to better represent the specific needs of the Atlantic region in areas such as: use of transportation as a regional development tool; better coordination of various modes of transportation; better coordination of federal and provincial policies and initiatives; the need to define an essential transportation network for Atlantic Canada; and better use of funds under the Freight Subsidy Program. Some success has been achieved in initiating a review of transportation subsidies and in having Transport Canada and the NTA try to define an essential rail network for the Atlantic Canada region.

Trade

ACOA, through Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada negotiators, played a major role in formulating Canada's position within the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations in advocating a carve-out for regional development subsidies. ACOA successfully advocated that subsidies for regional development purposes be classified as non-countervailable under GATT rules. For the first time in GATT's history, there is a provision for a subsidy definition which places regional development subsidies in the non-countervailable category.

Advocacy Within the Region

Advocating Atlantic interests effectively implies that there is a single definition of what is the best interest for the Atlantic region. One has to be reminded that the region includes four provinces, four distinct governments with some degree of difference in perspective of what is best for their respective province, and four distinct economies and industrial make-up. The geography and composition of each province's population also entails a variety of cultural and social interests, which influence the outlook each one has of its own economic development.

ACOA is in a unique position to identify priorities and bring the provinces together to work in a concerted, coordinated way. ACOA's role can be illustrated in the tourism sector where the Agency advocated strongly for a cooperative, coordinated regional approach to tourism marketing. In 1991, the four Atlantic tourism industry associations and ACOA managed to attract only two funding partners, the promotion generating some 6,000 inquiries. In 1993,

there were 27 partners involved, including the four provincial governments, and the campaign identified over 30,000 potential new tourists. Evaluations of the tourism marketing program⁹ have demonstrated that each dollar of advertising returns approximately \$6 in tourism expenditure in the area. In tandem with the tourism industry, ACOA is working in five specific areas: Atlantic region accommodation grading standards; cooperative marketing; a central reservation and information system; establishment of an Atlantic forum allowing industry and government partners to work together on common tourism development goals; and development of regionally-attuned tourism policy positions and a better prepared regional tourism industry.

"Ontario and Quebec represent a substantial segment of the Atlantic Canada tourism market. The recognition of this fact by ACOA and its assistance in our marketing program are invaluable. For the first time, we will have a measurable campaign to guide our future efforts."

*Regina McCarthy
(Former) Chairman
Atlantic Canada Tourism Industry Caucus
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Spring 1991*

Despite the achievements to date, the Agency has not yet given Advocacy the attention it deserves, given that it can potentially have a greater impact than direct financial support. As resources become increasingly scarce, it will become important to ensure that federal expenditures are making their maximum contribution to regional development.

⁹Based on various evaluations of the "Atlantic Canada: A Coast of Difference" marketing campaigns conducted by Corporate Research Associates Inc., Price Waterhouse and HEAD Research.

COORDINATION

In the earlier years of the Agency, because of the high visibility of the financial assistance programs and the significant resources that these consumed, not enough emphasis was put on ACOA's Coordination role. However, as pointed out earlier, a major effort to coordinate federal programming is being carried out under the COOPERATION Program and it has met with considerable success. Here, the Agency was able to use the incentive of funding to achieve program coordination and lever financial investments from other federal departments in the region.

As a newcomer on the Atlantic region economic scene, it was relatively difficult for ACOA to assume a leadership role before it had the opportunity to show proof of its ability to assume such a leadership. However, the Agency's early successes under the Action and COOPERATION Programs in stimulating business confidence and entrepreneurship, bringing in a strategic focus to development activities and improving federal-provincial consultation, developed the Agency's credibility and also gave it a reputation for bringing parties together to solve development problems.

Increasingly, people are looking to ACOA when they look to government for action because it is accessible and has a presence in the region. Public opinion surveys undertaken in 1992 indicated that 77% of people in the region were aware of the Agency and 65% believed ACOA was successful in meeting its mandate of long-term economic growth.¹⁰ It should be noted that these surveys cover the population at large and not only program users, i.e. those who might expect some direct benefits from ACOA.

With a few years experience in the field and with increasing recognition of its role and accomplishments in the region, ACOA became an increasingly important partner to federal line departments. It is assuming its Coordination role without assuming other departments' responsibilities.

¹⁰Omnifacts Research - A Report on Advertising Awareness and Recall, 1993.

"In addition, we see great value in having an agency like the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, actively pursuing the issues of the Region within the Federal Government. A.C.O.A.'s role as a facilitator or catalyst for greater economic cooperation within and between key sectors and between the four Atlantic Provinces, its activity in helping to raise the awareness and profile in the areas of Entrepreneurship and Human Resource Development, in leveraging its resources with those of other public sector organizations, the private sector, and the not-for-profit sector, have all provided enhanced value in the Atlantic Region. Value which could not be realized from a centralized office in Ottawa."

*Donald G. Newman, Chairman
Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce
News Release, October 29, 1993*

The crunch created by the significant reduction of federal resources and the critical situation created by major structural changes in the Atlantic economic base has increased the importance of the Agency's Coordination role. All forces have to be brought together to address the fisheries crisis, the decreasing importance of the resource-based industries and the need to live in an increasingly competitive and knowledge-based environment. The world is changing rapidly and all of Canada's regions will have to adapt and put all their forces and resources together to meet the challenge.

At the regional level, such a regrouping of resources and energies has taken place and continues to take place. ACOA is not only a partner, but is increasingly taking a Coordination role because of its wider perspective of the region's economy and its recognized experience in a multiplicity of business and economy-related areas. In other words, ACOA as a "generalist" Agency can more effectively bring together a number of "specialized" line departments to search for common areas of development. The ability to bring forces together to solve regional problems will be more effective and less costly than if each department goes solo, duplicates or even unknowingly works at cross-purposes from each other's initiatives.

Regional Councils

Throughout Atlantic Canada, ACOA coordinates interdepartmental regional councils comprised of senior federal officials from throughout the region to share information and to coordinate federal departments' actions on key issues (such as the development of megaprojects) where decisions will affect the economy of the region.

Summerside

"In reviewing the Summerside experience there seemed to be one consistent observation and that was that ACOA was the vehicle that made things happen."

*John Cameron
Independent Consultant*

The Coordination or leadership role of ACOA is exemplified by the central role the Agency assumed in the development of Summerside following the base closure, which meant a critical loss of employment and revenue for the Province of Prince Edward Island. ACOA worked very closely with federal departments and the Province and was instrumental in having the base turned over to the private sector and in the development of the Summerside Aerospace Centre. Two firms are now located at the centre, specializing in aircraft repair and overhaul. Employment and Immigration Canada participated in the initiative by providing the necessary training.

The location of the Summerside Fiscal Centre, the expansion of the food processing industry and other private sector initiatives are the result of this collaborative effort which has done much to aid the area's economy and to bring back hope and new employment opportunities to the people of Summerside.

"The relationship with ACOA has been nothing but good... The ACOA people have always been very accessible, and we've nothing but a spirit of cooperation with ACOA. We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for that."

*Mike Everett, General Manager
Atlantic Turbines Ltd.
Summerside, Prince Edward Island*

Fisheries

With the current crisis shaking the fisheries industry, the need for a major restructuring of Atlantic Canada's economy is recognized by the industry, the workers and governments. Again, ACOA is being called on to play a central role in planning alternative employment opportunities and in bringing together and coordinating other federal departments' efforts to build a new, less dependent economic future for the region.

Canada Business Service Centres

The evaluation of the Action Program found a very large number of federal and provincial business assistance programs with similar objectives and clientele. The evaluation of the COOPERATION Program reported that provincial officials and some federal officials perceived overlap of programs to be a problem.¹¹ As an example, there are about 150 programs of support to business in Newfoundland. The numbers are similar for the other provinces. Each program has its own set of eligibility criteria that define the clients, sector, funding levels, program timing and eligible activities. Taken together, these factors restrict the access to programs available to a client and add to the complexity of support. The number of programs adds to the amount of bureaucracy needed to administer them and to keep them current in order to provide accurate advice to clients.

There is also a proliferation of delivery organizations helping clients, including federal departments, provincial governments, universities, municipal industrial commissions, Community Futures Associations and business associations.

It has long been realized that better coordination can improve the effectiveness of the process. Another example of the central Coordination role of the Agency and of its recognition as a major player is the responsibility given to ACOA to coordinate the development of Canada Business Service Centres in the Atlantic provinces. The first centre, developed as a pilot project, is now in operation in Halifax. It brings to the same location as many as 15 federal departments or agencies offering a variety of services, programs and information of importance to the business community. The centre also benefits from provincial participation.

¹¹COOPERATION Program Evaluation Study Report, Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group (report in progress).

As the lead department in Atlantic Canada for providing assistance to small and medium-sized business, ACOA has a major opportunity to encourage the streamlining of government services and assistance to business.

Memorandum of Understanding with the National Research Council

ACOA and NRC have complementary mandates in the areas of innovation and technology for Atlantic Canada. In order to more effectively deliver their programs, an MOU was signed in December 1991 to work together on innovation project applications from the private sector. Under this arrangement, ACOA has access to NRC's technical expertise for the development and evaluation of innovation applications, and NRC has access to ACOA's expertise in the financial aspects of evaluation. This arrangement has fostered a more efficient use of human resources and a more coordinated use of program funds.

Federal-Provincial Coordination

ACOA places a priority on ongoing consultation and discussions with provincial governments. For example, in New Brunswick, a Federal-Provincial Coordination Committee meets every month to discuss strategic projects and issues relative to economic development. Similar initiatives exist in the other provinces.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Fisheries Alternatives Program

In November 1990, ACOA was given the responsibility to implement a \$90-million (increased to \$115 million in 1993) Fisheries Alternatives Program (FAP) which is the only element of the \$584 million Atlantic Fisheries Adjustment Program specifically designed to help diversify the economies of rural fishery-dependent communities and to provide alternate employment opportunities to workers displaced by the downturn in the fishery. With broader sectoral eligibility and more generous assistance than the Action Program, plus the placement of community development officers in strategic areas, FAP targets those communities affected by the downturn in the fishery.

In Newfoundland where the adjustment was the most necessary, FAP has encouraged entrepreneurial activity. At March 31, 1993, the Program had assisted 748 projects of which a large proportion (38%) were in the manufacturing sector. The great majority (86%) were small projects of less than \$200,000.

As an example, in the remote Labrador community of Rigolet, the Program has helped a local entrepreneur to build the community's only inn. With financial backing from FAP and other funds coordinated partly by ACOA staff members who helped him cut through red tape, Max Blake saw his dream of a seven-bedroom country inn rise from the ground during the summer of 1992.

FISHERIES ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM STATISTICS **SUMMARY OF FAP ACTIVITY SINCE INCEPTION**

Inception (November 1990) to March 31, 1993

# of projects approved:	748
Authorized assistance:	\$61.86 million
Total project cost:	\$147.7 million
Jobs created:	2,153
Jobs maintained:	1,516

Pan-Atlantic Development Activity

The Pan-Atlantic Development Activity was introduced in December 1992 as a follow-up to the 1991 consultations where regional decision-makers and businesspeople pointed out the need for ACOA to develop a greater awareness of common interest in Atlantic Canada and of the strengths to be found by marketing the region collectively. Two initiatives have been introduced:

1. **The Entrepreneurship Development Program** to implement the Agency's entrepreneurship development priority on a region-wide basis.
2. **The Economic Coordination and Integration Program** to promote economic growth by coordinating federal economic development activities and opportunities that are pan-Atlantic in nature.

The Maritime provinces (and in some cases, Newfoundland as well) have adopted an agenda for regional cooperation in a number of areas, including tourism development, trade development, technology, transportation, infrastructure and resource sector development.

The Atlantic region is in the forefront in developing common actions to eliminate trade barriers and develop joint procurement policies. ACOA, as the only federal economic development department in Atlantic Canada with a region-wide mandate, has a unique opportunity to encourage integrated development on the regional level.

CHAPTER THREE

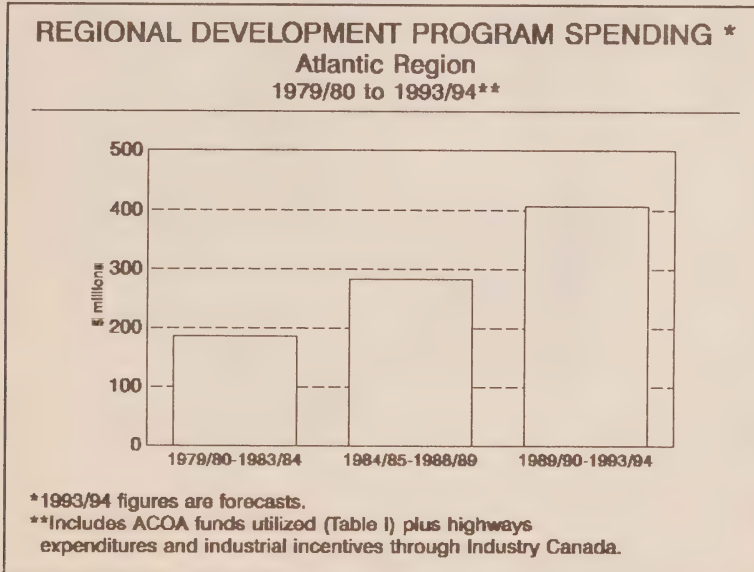
BENEFITS FOR THE REGION

REGIONAL DISPARITY

Since the creation of ACOA, Canadian regional economic development policy has focused on the objective of maximizing opportunities for growth in each of Canada's regions based on competitive strengths and with special emphasis on those regions with the most severe problems. Regional development expenditures are made to support opportunities in every province.

Because the bulk of federal spending has been directed towards supporting existing standards of living (e.g., unemployment insurance, equalization payments) rather than promoting new wealth and opportunity, regional development spending accounts for only a small fraction of total federal government spending. This fraction is less than 3% in 1992-93 in the Atlantic region. Thus, the resources directed to regional development are extremely small in relation to the problem. For example, average regional development expenditures over the period 1989-90 to 1993-94 (Exhibit 3.1) of just over \$400 million were little more than 1% of the total annual value of the Atlantic provinces' economy.

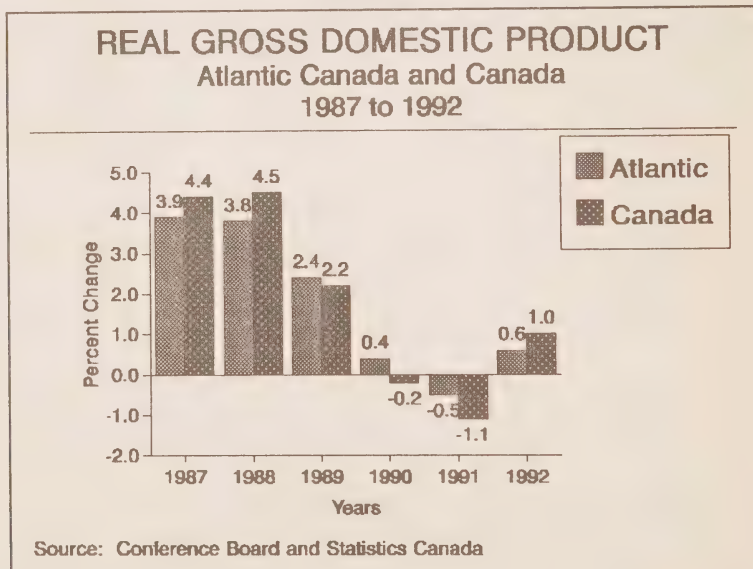
Exhibit 3.1



Substantial portions of regional development expenditures in the Atlantic region are directed toward improving the foundations and climate for economic growth (e.g., spending on highway infrastructure or on improvements to the region's educational infrastructure). These expenditures cannot be expected to produce significant benefits in the short to medium term. The Atlantic economy has experienced a double blow in the last three years. First, the region is experiencing severe structural adjustment with, for example, the virtual closure of the groundfish fishery, the closure of Canadian Forces bases, and restructuring and closures in the pulp and paper and mining industries, resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs. Second is the effects of the recession. Traditionally, the Atlantic region lags behind the rest of the country in recovering from recessions. Unemployment remains high across the country in what has been termed the "jobless" recovery and is especially severe in the Atlantic region.

In terms of the growth in real GDP, the Atlantic region has kept pace with the nation over the 1987-1992 period (Exhibit 3.2). In terms of real GDP per capita, the disparity gap was reduced somewhat. In 1992, real GDP per capita in the Atlantic region was 75.4% of the national level, up from 71.6% in 1987.

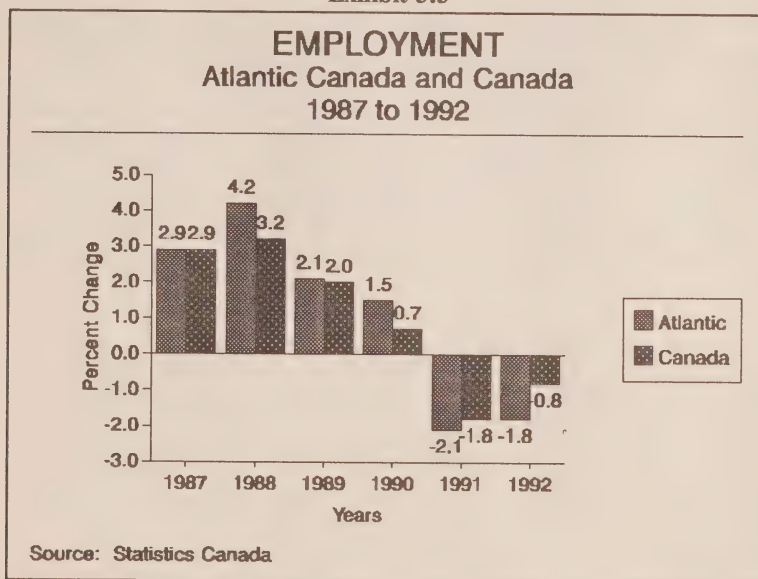
Exhibit 3.2



Over the 1987-92 period, the population growth in the region was less than for Canada as a whole. Net migration out of the region totalled almost 27,000 over the 1986-91 period, continuing a trend which has seen almost 250,000 people, a total equal to more than 10% of the current population, migrate from the region in the last 30 years.¹² In Newfoundland, over 20% of the current population has migrated in the last 30 years. The migrants tend to be younger and better educated than the average member of the labour force.

Employment growth over the 1987-1992 period averaged 1% in the Atlantic provinces, identical to the rate of growth for Canada as a whole (Exhibit 3.3). The unemployment rate averaged 14.9% in 1992, as compared to a national rate of 11.3%. The "gap" of 3.6 percentage points between the Canadian and Atlantic unemployment rates is the lowest it has been in 10 years.

Exhibit 3.3



¹²Source: Statistics Canada, Census.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COOPERATION AND ACTION PROGRAMS

The evaluations of the COOPERATION and Action Programs by Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse, respectively, provide estimates of the extent to which these activities have contributed to the growth of economic activity in the Atlantic region. Together, these two activities have accounted for over 85% of Agency expenditures, over the 1987-88 to 1992-93 period.

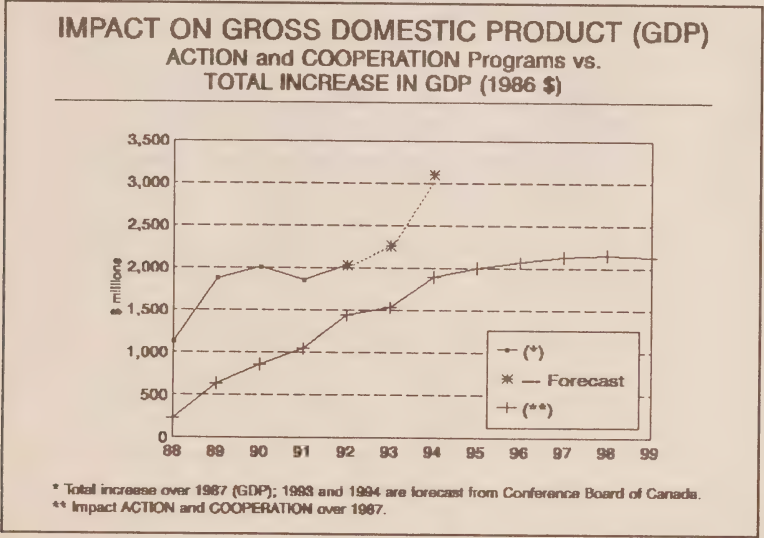
The evaluations estimate the direct impact of program expenditures on employment or value-added using, primarily, follow-up surveys of clients. The Conference Board's econometric model of the Atlantic economy is then used to translate these direct impacts into the total impact on the economy, taking into account things such as impacts on suppliers and the spending of wages.

It is important to note two features of the estimates. First, the estimates include only those impacts from investment which would not have occurred without the programs. For the Action Program, for example, the only impacts included are for the 43% of clients who would have cancelled their project if no support had been provided. Second, the estimates are additional to the impact resulting from an equivalent expenditure on transfers to persons (e.g., expenditures such as unemployment insurance). In the absence of ACOA expenditures to support productive investment and long-term employment, this type of support to the unemployed in the region would probably have been required. Therefore, the estimates isolate the net benefits of regional development spending over spending made just to maintain living standards.

Overall, it is felt that the estimates of economic benefit are balanced and realistic. It has not been possible to quantify any negative impacts on competitors of assisted businesses. However, assessment practices are in place to ensure that this impact is at the minimum consistent with the Agency's effort to foster overall competitiveness. Any impact is offset by the fact that no benefits have been assigned to those projects which would have been delayed (25% of total) or downsized (24% of total) without ACOA's assistance. Based on what is known about the lifecycle of small business, additional ACOA supported businesses will fail with time, but this is offset by the fact that no allowance has been made for a significant number of cases where the assets are put back into productive use without further Agency support.

Looking at the impact on GDP (Exhibit 3.4), by 1992 it is estimated that GDP is \$1.4 billion higher annually in constant 1986 dollars than it would have been if equivalent expenditures had been spent on unemployment insurance.¹³ Total Atlantic GDP is approximately \$2.2 billion, above the 1987 level. The Agency's programs have made important contributions to overall economic growth. In fact, the Agency's activity has accounted for about 85% of the narrowing in the disparity gap; as without this activity, the gap in GDP per capita would have narrowed only marginally from 71.6% of the Canadian average in 1987, to 72.2% in 1992. The Agency's activities have been especially important over the last two years, as overall growth has flattened out with the impact of the recession and restructuring in certain major sectors. What is more, the productive investments supported by the Agency's programs result in long-term impact, with the addition to GDP peaking at \$2.1 billion in 1997 without further expenditures beyond current commitments.

Exhibit 3.4

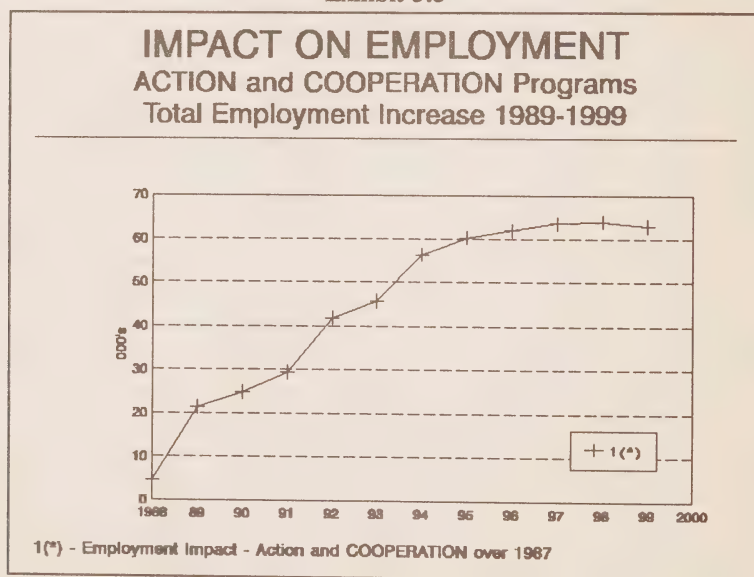


As one example, employment in businesses supported by the programs continues long after the front-end government support for the life of the production equipment. As another example, benefits from highway construction continue for the 20 to 25-year life of the improvement.

¹³Based on evaluations by Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand.

The two programs have also had a significant impact on employment creation in the region. As shown in Exhibit 3.5, the additional employment resulting from program expenditures is 42,000 by 1992 and will peak at about 64,000 by 1998.¹⁴ Additional employment from the COOPERATION Program is 31,000 and from the Action Program is 33,000. The unemployment rate is 1% lower in 1992 than it would have been without the Agency's activity. As with GDP, the impact of the Agency's activities has become especially important for employment creation in the last two years, as the Atlantic economy has suffered from severe adjustment crises in major industries. Agency activity has been responsible for significant job gains in expanding and newly-established companies. However, job losses, due to the recession and restructuring of the resource sectors, have largely offset gains in the last two years. For example, layoffs and closures among major employers alone total approximately 35,000 jobs over the last two years. Net employment growth has fallen short of what is required for the economy to achieve its potential and employ the available labour force.

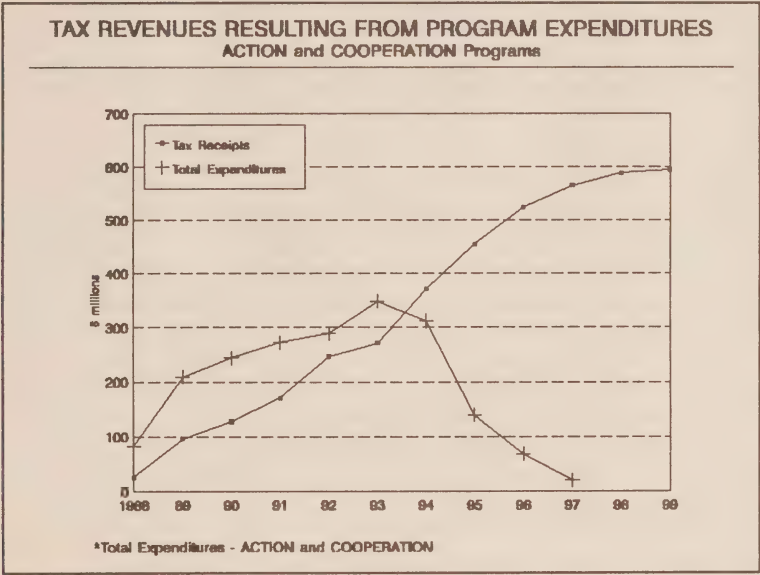
Exhibit 3.5



¹⁴Based on evaluations by Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand.

As shown in Exhibit 3.6, additional annual tax receipts resulting from the increased economic activity reached a level of \$240 million in 1992, as compared to program expenditures of \$290 million.¹⁵ Tax receipts will reach \$600 million in 1999 without further expenditures beyond current commitments. Over the 1987-1999 period, total tax revenues are forecasted at \$3.8 billion compared to \$2.0 billion in expenditures. Expenditures are only those made or projected to result from commitments as of March 31, 1993, and as such, do not include commitments that the Agency has made or will make beyond that date. Note that tax revenues are total federal and provincial taxes excluding corporate income taxes and that expenditures include both federal and provincial spending.

Exhibit 3.6



¹⁵Based on evaluations by Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand.

DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS - EXAMPLES FROM ECONOMIC SECTORS

Perhaps the best appreciation of the total impact of Agency activities on the economic development of the region is obtained by looking at a few of the economic sectors where ACOA has made major investments. As outlined earlier, the present direction of regional policy goes beyond a concern with disparities to measures aimed at assisting the regions to attain their potential by removing structural barriers to growth. In the examples that follow, the economic impacts are described, as well as examples of how ACOA leadership, advocacy and support have encouraged the private sector to develop alliances and partnerships to take charge of its own development and lessen reliance on government support. Alliances to share information and expertise can overcome the disadvantages a regional business faces because of the low density of population and remoteness from major markets and suppliers. In addition, there are examples of how the Agency's support is becoming increasingly focused on the strategic priorities for success in the global economy, such as marketing and the application of technology. These examples also show how the Agency's support has strengthened the economic activity in specific geographical regions.

- **Tourism - Cape Breton**

The difficulties of the recession have not spared the tourism sector on any basis, locally, provincially or nationally. However, the demands of tough economic times have forced those involved in the tourism industry to assess, focus and meet some new challenges. There has been an increased willingness by local owners and operators to work collaboratively on more cooperative projects than ever before.

Cape Breton's tourism industry has weathered the recession reasonably well and has proven to be an area for growth potential. As of the 1992 season, tourism accounts for the equivalent of 3,900 full-time jobs and \$160 million in revenue. The tourism industry in Cape Breton has shown strong growth in the last two years, outperforming the industry both at the provincial and national levels.

This sustained growth in the tourism sector has been accomplished through a concerted effort by the private sector and government agencies such as ACOA and Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC). Over the past five years, ACOA has provided \$7.3 million in contribution assistance, as well as \$1.2 million in loan insurance for projects undertaken throughout Cape Breton. This funding has levered \$13.9 million in private sector investment and has created and/or maintained over 350 jobs, representing a 10% growth in the region's tourism employment.

CHAPTER THREE

The major emphasis of ACOA's contribution has been the modernization and upgrading of tourist facilities throughout Cape Breton Island in order to improve their competitiveness. In addition, there has been a focus on marketing initiatives. These efforts have increased awareness of the Cape Breton product and have translated into increased enquiries and tourist visits. Enquiries are on the rise and, in fact, have doubled over the last year.

"I believe, as do many of my colleagues in the tourism industry, that the presence of ACOA on Cape Breton Island has had a very positive effect. They have helped us grow in our industry and in our business. We have been able to expand our business as you have helped expand our markets. ACOA has given us the opportunity to better compete in this more complex marketplace."

*Robert Wambolt, President
Cape Breton Tourist Association*

• Nova Scotia Software Industry

ACOA has been a major factor in the growth of the Nova Scotia software industry. The Agency's support focused on innovation projects by companies to develop new software products and support for marketing. About \$18 million in assistance has gone to 100 firms. The industry has recorded rapid growth in the past few years. Currently, the industry produces revenues of \$60 million annually from software development, about half of total revenues of \$120 million, and employs up to 900 people.¹⁶ Software is a product that can be readily sold in any geographic market by a company located anywhere in the world. More than half of the companies generate sales in export markets.

"The 'heady' success that we are starting to enjoy has been the direct result of focusing on sales and marketing. To this extent, ACOA has been extremely helpful and lent us money at a time when we simply could not afford to even attempt the marketing program that we needed to boost sales."

*Ralph Barhydt, President and CEO
TGS Systems
Halifax Daily News
September 24, 1993*

¹⁶Nova Scotia Software Industry Study, Lawrence & Milley Consultants Inc., 1993.

Recognizing that small companies in the industry could gain considerable leverage by pooling their resources, ACOA and the Province of Nova Scotia are partnering with the Software Industry Association of Nova Scotia (SIANS) under the Canada-Nova Scotia Technology Development COOPERATION Agreement. The SIANS will be implementing a growth strategy for the industry, focusing on promoting more effective marketing in order to increase sales in export markets. Marketing knowledge, expertise and marketing management have been identified by the industry as the critical factors for success. SIANS will concentrate on developing linkages and alliances to promote the transfer of information and expertise.

"Your comments were interesting, timely and appreciated. I feel our membership, and the industry in general, has benefited significantly from the support provided by ACOA. Your commitment of continued support is encouraging."

*John D. MacCulloch
Executive Director
Software Industry Association of Nova Scotia
September 1, 1992*

• **Biotechnology - Prince Edward Island**

In the past few years, an industry has emerged built around health systems for the aquaculture industry and diagnostic health-testing kits and systems for hospital and medical use. The majority of industry sales are to export markets.

ACOA has played a major role in the development of the industry through direct support to business for product development and marketing. In addition, the Agency has worked with partners to develop expertise to support companies. For example, support has been provided to the P.E.I. Food Technology Centre. The Atlantic Veterinary College, an initiative of the Council of Maritime Premiers, and Agriculture Canada's new pathology laboratory complete the complex of support services. The important companies in the industry are now well established in international markets. The products and expertise developed in serving the region's growing aquaculture industry provide an important competitive advantage in serving the growing world market for disease-prevention products.

"We've been expanding our business for a number of years and ACOA has been receptive to our needs and a partner in our success. We certainly have appreciated their support through the years."

*Regis Duffy, Owner
Diagnostic Chemicals Ltd.
West Royalty, Prince Edward Island*

- **Softwood Sawmill Industry - Nova Scotia**

Following a shipment of lumber from Canada infested with pinewood nematode in 1990, the European Commission (EC) announced a ban on all imported lumber effective January 1, 1993. The only exception was to be lumber which had been kiln-dried or heat-treated. The proposed EC ban represented a serious threat to the Nova Scotia industry, as close to 25% of production is exported to Europe. Most mills are located in rural areas where there are very few employment alternatives.

Since 1990, ACOA, in line with the national forest policy, has provided assistance to several mills to acquire dry-kiln facilities. ACOA support has been a key factor in the mills' investment decisions, given the estimated average cost per kiln of \$600,000. As a result, kiln-drying capacity has reached 33% of lumber capacity, up from 5% only five years ago. ACOA assistance has enabled the industry to retain its export markets, maintaining the approximately 500 export dependant jobs in this 1,500 to 2,000 jobs industry, and up to \$35 million in export sales.

- **Salmon Aquaculture - New Brunswick**

There are few better examples of the benefits to be obtained from government risk-sharing with the private sector than aquaculture, a business where the risks are high but where success can lead to significant economic benefits. ACOA's support to New Brunswick's salmon aquaculture entrepreneurs has been crucial to the growth of the industry. Start-up risks are high because of the dangers of crop losses from disease. Working capital needs are large because at least 18 months is required for the first crop. Marketing is also high-risk, as 75%-80% of the product is exported. Conventional commercial lenders cannot provide all the financing required. ACOA's approach has recognized that industry viability depends on the balanced growth of all major inputs. Through its Action and COOPERATION Programs, ACOA has provided some \$17 million of a total of \$20 million in total government support to grow-out sites (approximately \$6 million), processors, feed producers, cage and net manufacturers, hatcheries, and research and technology transfer facilities.

The salmon aquaculture industry has grown from one farm in 1978 to over 60 sites with a total landed value exceeding \$100 million annually. There are about 500 people directly employed in farming operations and approximately 1,000 employed in spin-off industries such as fish feed production, fish processing, cage and net production and health and diagnostic services. The industry also benefits from excellent research and technology transfer facilities, including the St. Andrews biotechnology research centre of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Huntsman Marine Science Centre, the Atlantic Salmon Federation and the Atlantic Salmon Demonstration and Development Farm run by the New Brunswick Salmon Growers Association and the New Brunswick Research and Productivity Council.

The industry is rapidly developing a critical mass of players which is taking charge of its own development. In addition to research facilities and small family-run businesses, there are a number of large operations backed by multinational owners who bring expertise and financing to the industry. The Agency has learned from the experience on Canada's west coast and Norway where many large projects have failed. As a result, ACOA has favoured modest and prudent investment with the average assistance to farms being less than \$100,000. The industry's financial record has been exceptional with no reported failures among farmers to date.

There is considerable potential for an increase in salmon production based on the strengths of the industry in terms of high-product quality, competitive production costs and access to technical knowledge, as well as proximity to the large eastern U.S. market.

"The aquaculture industry has given a great boost to this area. There's a tremendous amount of employment created, and even though we've gone through a recession, there's a feeling of optimism here."

*Vance Craig, Former Mayor
St. George, New Brunswick
Globe and Mail, Report on Business, August 1993*

"We probably have the most stable and profitable aquaculture business in North America. It's well developed because it was well planned by industry and the federal and provincial agencies and we have good farmers."

*Bill Thompson, General Manager
New Brunswick Salmon Growers Association
Globe and Mail, Report on Business, August 1993*

• Food Processing - Prince Edward Island

Since 1990, ACOA and the Province of Prince Edward Island have levered about \$100 million of investment in the province's potato processing industry with a \$30 million investment in waste treatment facilities cost-shared 70/30, ACOA- Province of P.E.I., under the ERDA and COOPERATION agreements. The waste treatment facilities are owned by a provincial Crown agency and 100% of the operating costs of the facilities are paid for by the industry. This investment has enabled the establishment and expansion of world-class facilities on P.E.I. Exports account for about 95 % of production. Employment has increased by approximately 40% to total over 900 persons. This investment and growth have added value to exported production and have profoundly changed the face of the potato industry in P.E.I. The portion of the potato acreage going to processing has increased by about 50% to 24,000 acres and the potential exists for a doubling to 32,000 acres of the 80,000 total potato acreage. The Fixed Link will lower transportation costs and help improve the competitive position and growth potential of the industry.

• Growth of High Technology Firms - Newfoundland

The emergence and growth of high technology firms in the St. John's area are excellent examples of how ACOA has used all its program tools in partnership with the private sector to help capture growth opportunities. Agency support has been directed to the priorities of marketing and technology development and transfer. The growth in the high technology sector originated with the development of technology to exploit Newfoundland's competitive strengths in the area of ocean industries.

An important source of funding for the necessary infrastructure to support the private sector is the \$300 million Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Development Fund. In excess of \$100 million has been invested in infrastructure that includes wave generation, centrifuge modelling and marine simulation training. ACOA, through its Advocacy and Coordination roles, has been instrumental in bringing the resources of other government departments, notably, Natural Resources Canada, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the National Research Council (NRC), to the support of the high technology sector. One example is the funding of the NRC's wave generator in St. John's. NRC's facility was successful in its bid to perform large-scale model testing for the Hibernia gravity base structure. In addition, the facility was awarded a contract in excess of \$350,000 to perform subsidence tests on Phillips Petroleum EKOFISK field in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea.

Again through its Advocacy role, ACOA has worked to ensure that the Hibernia project results in a maximum of benefits to the high technology sector. An emphasis has been

placed on supporting firms in marketing to the global market. The Newfoundland Ocean Industries Association (NOIA), a group of over 300 companies, has received support from ACOA to assist its members to capture business opportunities in the ocean industries and, in particular, the oil and gas industry. Forty percent of NOIA's member companies are involved in high technology export sales. In partnership with ACOA, NOIA has pursued the maximization of offshore benefits to Atlantic Canada by co-sponsoring, along with Hibernia Management and Development Company, a series of information seminars in Atlantic Canada outlining offshore opportunities available to local firms.

ACOA has been the catalyst for the establishment of high technology firms, as well as for institutional infrastructure to support and complement this growth area. In order to obtain maximum leverage from investments, the Agency has encouraged strategic alliances and joint ventures with foreign partners to provide access to expertise, financing and markets.

One example is Glamox Canada Limited, formed in August 1991 as a joint venture with Glamox A/S of Norway (49%) and Mike Palmer of St. John's (51%). Glamox Canada Limited owns the marketing and manufacturing rights to all Glamox lighting products sold in North America. Glamox Canada Limited has a manufacturing operation in Trepassey, an engineering design and sales office in St. John's and has 30 employees.

Ultimateast Data Communications Limited was established in 1986 by the two original employees to provide communication products and services to the marine industry. Ultimateast and its sister company, Sea Link Limited (formed in 1987), have since experienced a significant increase in sales and have grown to about 55 employees, most of whom are very highly skilled. Ultimateast and Sea Link provide sales and service to countries all over the world and a significant amount of their revenues are derived from export sales.

Ultimateast Data Communications Limited has developed a number of satellite and ground wave communications products. Ultimateast Data Communications Limited and Sea Link Limited have signed international agreements with strategic partners that positioned them to enjoy significant growth in the future.

Major support on the institutional front has included, in partnership with Communications Canada, funding to the Canadian Centre for Marine Communications (CCMC), resulting in the creation of some 15 positions. CCMC makes state-of-the-art communications expertise and equipment facilities available to its member companies and also acts as a liaison in assisting its member companies in accessing the communications services of federal government departments.

Also, Seabright Corporation Limited has received ACOA funding which allowed for the creation of some 10 positions. Seabright's mandate is to transfer the technology developed at Memorial University of Newfoundland to industrial sectors and to commercialize university-based research through licensing arrangements, technology transfer agreements and the formation of new companies.

"We are pleased that ACOA has recognized the potential our company has in the international marketplace. The Agency has been of assistance to us in the past and our current success in some measure is due to their support."

*Derrick Rowe, President
Neweast Technologies Inc.
St. John's, Newfoundland*

• Information Technology Industry - New Brunswick

The information technology sector includes companies that design and manufacture telecommunications and microelectronic equipment, computers and software, and that provide computer and telecommunication services. In New Brunswick, the information technology sector is also complemented by a strong engineering consulting sector, and indeed many of the information technology companies have spun off from these firms. ACOA has strongly supported the information technology and engineering consulting sectors by providing about \$70 million of assistance to 240 firms, most of them being small firms with a highly educated labour force, which have created and maintained approximately 1,000 jobs. The total investment by the industry has been \$170 million. Sales generated from assisted firms are estimated at \$146.7 million domestic and \$36.4 million in export sales.

New Brunswick has leading-edge telecommunication technology and a core of sophisticated data processing companies. Products and services from New Brunswick information technology are found in telecommunications, nuclear and geographical information systems; courseware products such as computer-based training; artificial intelligence applications; and services in data processing and long-distance education. The bilingual character of the province has also generated computer-based translation capacity supported by a strong linguistic department at l'Université de Moncton. These products and services are marketed internationally and contribute to replace part of Atlantic Canada's declining commodity exports. In software alone, New Brunswick firms had a revenue of about \$167.5 million in 1992.

The industry benefits from a highly developed network of research and development centres of excellence, many of which have been supported by ACOA. These include the New Brunswick Research and Productivity Council, Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, Geosciences Information Systems Laboratory, CADMI Microelectronics, Ocean Mapping Group, and the New Brunswick universities and community colleges research facilities and training programs.

"ACOA's advocacy activities on Datacor's behalf have been key to Datacor's success in winning a major \$20 million, five-year computer processing contract in 1991."

*J. R. Percy, (Former) President and CEO
Datacor Atlantic Inc.
Moncton, New Brunswick*

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR GROWTH

The impact of the Agency's activities cannot be measured only in terms of increased income and employment. Much of ACOA's support is directed towards putting in place the infrastructure or tools necessary for people to build economic activity. This is especially true in rural areas where access to business information and expertise is limited.

- **The ACOA/Enterprise Network**

The ACOA/Enterprise Network is a \$7.1 million information technology project funded under the COOPERATION Program, in partnership with the Enterprise Newfoundland and Labrador Corporation. It was originally conceived and designed to stimulate entrepreneurship in rural areas by providing information through six regional telecentres to assist in identifying and developing business opportunities. Its success has enabled it to branch out from providing access to business information databases to a number of other services. For example, the Network is mounting an "Ask the Expert" service which will enable clients to consult experts who have agreed to donate their time. The Network has initiated a technology alliance project, linking technology companies in Newfoundland with national research institutes in Ottawa and Montreal.

Exposure to the ACOA/Enterprise Network services has paid off in the development of business opportunities in the information technology industry. For example, the Network's first private user, a Labrador company, has recently signed a contract to develop software.

CHAPTER THREE

A private digitizing service has been established at Milltown, Bay d'Espoir, employing over 20 people and serving export markets. Several other projects are in development.

A good example of the partnering which characterizes the ACOA/Enterprise Network is an agreement by which the Newfoundland Department of Social Services pays the salary costs of social services recipients while they learn to become information assistants.

The ACOA/Enterprise Network is a model of how information technology can be popularized and managed in a rural context. Targeting an audience almost 100% computer illiterate to begin with, the Network has succeeded, in just three years, in generating a client base of 350 full network users and 1,000 users connected by mail link. A survey of clients indicates that the ACOA/Enterprise Network has successfully promoted information technology as a more efficient way of doing business in rural areas to the point where clients are prepared to pay for the service rather than lose it.

"I personally believe that the services offered by the ACOA/Enterprise Network must be retained, if those living in rural Newfoundland are to compete on a level playing field."

*C. M. Ennis, Executive Director
Community Futures Committee
Baie Verte Peninsula, Newfoundland*

• Consult'Action Chaleur

In 1991, as a means to help the Northeast New Brunswick Chaleur area, the Nepisiguit Economic Conference recommended that business support organizations and departments be brought together under the same roof. The idea was picked up by the Chaleur Regional Development Commission and now the Consult'Action Chaleur located in Bathurst brings together the local offices or representatives of 11 federal, provincial, municipal and business organizations.

Located in Consult'Action Chaleur are:

- local organizations such as the Chaleur Regional Development Commission, the Bathurst Chamber of Commerce, the Nepisiguit Community Futures Committee and the Bathurst Downtown Revitalization Corporation;
- the ACOA Bathurst office and regional offices of the Regional Development Corporation and Research and Productivity Council; and

- representatives of the provincial Department of Economic Development and Tourism, the Entrepreneurship Centre, Revenue Canada and the Federal Business Development Bank.

Besides providing support through its Action and COOPERATION Programs, ACOA is proud to have been a close partner in this venture where the leadership remains in the community itself.

The Consult'Action Centre is becoming the main consultation centre for the Chaleur region's enterprises where major business groups can be reached at the same location and at the same phone number. Reaction from the business community is a good indication that such an experience is welcome and could serve as a model for other smaller centres or rural communities where coordinated and shared services can make operations more cost-efficient and improve the quality and level of services available.

"Imagine the strength of the consultation that will be provided by such a regrouping. It will become the best ally of our business people and should contribute to the success of our businesses."

*Raymond Landry, First Vice-President
Chaleur Regional Development Commission
Info-Affaires, October 1993, Number 2, Volume 5*

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP TO THE REGION

ACOA is in a unique position to provide leadership on a region-wide basis by identifying development priorities of concern across the region and bringing together all parties to work on a coordinated regional approach.

- **Atlantic Geomatics Alliance**

The Atlantic Geomatics Alliance is one example of how ACOA has taken a leadership position to identify development priorities on a region-wide basis and coordinate efforts across the region. In this case, the activity relates to ACOA's technology priority by developing strategic technologies where the Atlantic region has a competitive edge and by facilitating spin-off activities.

The Alliance is a working relationship between the Champlain Institute, the Geomatics Industry Association of New Brunswick, the Geomatics Association of Nova Scotia, the Newfoundland Association of Technical Industries and ACOA. It seeks to develop an internationally competitive geomatics industry in Atlantic Canada that can compete successfully on domestic and foreign markets. The world market for new geomatics information system hardware, software and services has been estimated to be about \$5 billion and growing at a rate of about 20% annually.

Atlantic Canada has exceptional capabilities in the geomatics field and has received international recognition as a pioneer in the application of geomatics in areas such as the management of land records, natural resources and marine information. The regional industry is comprised of about 60 small firms, many with world-class expertise, but most lacking the resources to capture export markets. There is potential for this industry to become a world-class competitor. However, the size and low growth rate of the Atlantic Canada market meant that a catalyst was needed in this industry to develop the critical mass required.

A major objective of the Alliance has been to provide this catalyst. Another objective of this initiative has been to encourage the formation of private sector consortia and joint ventures in order for the industry to build the strong project teams necessary to pursue international markets. An important element is for firms to team up with government agencies, research institutions and universities that have both geomatics expertise and a need for geomatics products. The geomatics initiative has been very successful in meeting both of these objectives on a region-wide basis.

"The assistance of the Atlantic Geomatics Alliance and funding from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency facilitated the creation of the consortium and establishment of the project. Ongoing development of the products and completion of the LRMI implementation in Atlantic Canada will be funded by product sales and redirection of participating agency operating budgets. However, the seed money from ACOA, to get the ball rolling, made the Project possible."

*Atlantic Canada LRMI Consortium
(a consortium of: ESRI Canada, Toronto; Eastcan,
Halifax; Geoplan, Fredericton; and Atlantic
Geomatics Research, Sydney)
November 1992*

• Entrepreneurship Development

Entrepreneurship development is at the heart of ACOA's mission. The Agency stresses the importance of making entrepreneurship a stated objective of regional development through initiatives which create enhanced awareness, build entrepreneur networks, support development and delivery of entrepreneurship instructional and training materials, support policy analysis and research, and coordinate entrepreneur-related activity by other federal and provincial departments.

ACOA is playing a key leadership role in bringing together private sector organizations, the provinces and the other federal departments with complementary mandates to animate an Atlantic-wide focus on entrepreneurship development. ACOA has hosted three Entrepreneurship Development Workshops to exchange innovative approaches and practices in the development and delivery of entrepreneurship development projects, programs and activities. ACOA co-hosted and co-sponsored two National Policymakers' Forums on Women as Entrepreneurs, an interdepartmental forum on Entrepreneurship Development with key federal departments and a regional Federal-Provincial Forum on Small Business and Entrepreneurship which brought together key relevant federal and provincial departments in Atlantic Canada.

ACOA's support for private sector initiatives has proven successful in promoting entrepreneurship. A project with the Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick and other private organizations resulted in an educational television series "Posséder mon entreprise" aired by Radio Canada in 1991 and 1992 reaching nearly 8,000 French-speaking Atlantic Canadians.¹⁷ A similar educational series in English was aired by the Atlantic Satellite Network (ASN) in 1993. In total, over 650 people have registered to follow this series and to work on their own business plans. Maritime Independent Television (MITV) is airing the third season of the very successful "Leading Edge" television series which profiles regional business owners. Over 20,000 persons watch this television series on a weekly basis. The Atlantic Canada Entrepreneur Awards Association, a partnership between ACOA and eight private sector organizations, has held two ceremonies to reward successful entrepreneurs. The number of schools offering courses in entrepreneurship is rapidly increasing. Other projects encourage student venture activity, venture creation in the community, small business counselling and entrepreneurship training, and development of resource material for use in educational institutions. More than 5,000 Atlantic Canadians responded to ACOA's entrepreneurship ad campaign on how to start a business, indicating a strong latent demand.

¹⁷Bureau of Broadcast Measurement.

These initiatives appear to be paying off. Surveys reveal that there has been a steady increase in the "intent" of Atlantic Canadians to "start their own business within the next two years", from 7% of the population in 1991 to 12% in 1993.¹⁸ Based on Statistics Canada data, the number of self-employed has increased by 7.3% in Atlantic Canada from 1989 to 1991, as compared to 4.8% for Canada.

"I believe there are so many deserving companies that can win this award...the award is not mine; the employees all know that. I definitely would not accept it on my behalf because I know I don't deserve it without their backing - the employees feel very proud. It is their award ..."

*Normand Caissie
Imperial Sheet Metal, Richibucto, New Brunswick
1993 Atlantic Canada Entrepreneurship Awards*

PARTNERSHIPS WITH UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH CENTRES

- Alliance with University College of Cape Breton

ECBC/ACOA has developed an extensive network of contacts and an alliance with the University College of Cape Breton (UCCB) through a Memorandum of Understanding. Programs have been developed and assistance given to provide support infrastructure for local companies and to expose students to business and technology. In addition, demonstration pilot projects have been undertaken and industry advisory groups established in cooperation with UCCB. These activities have led to the development of new products and services and incremental contracts, an increase in applied research and development activity, development of new programs for youth and an increase in business and university networking.

¹⁸CRA Regional Omnibus Survey Quarterly Report, 3rd quarter, 1993.

"The linking of UCCB and ECBC through the MOU has been a positive step in the process of revitalizing Cape Breton's economy. While the concept of combining available resources to work towards a common goal is basic and direct; the MOU's effect can be far reaching because it focuses on matching capabilities to requirements."

*Nick Coyle
President and Chief Executive Officer
Micronav International*

- **The New Brunswick Research and Productivity Council**

The Atlantic Canada business community is primarily formed of SMEs with little in-house capability for R&D or innovative ventures. Only a few larger companies with their head office situated in the region undertake the riskier and longer-term investment needed for such initiatives. Pools of specialized knowledge and R&D experts can be found, however, in the universities and research centres which remain, for the most part, closely tied to educational institutions. ACOA has invested substantially to strengthen the research and innovation capacity of these groups to increase the level of expertise and build bridges between businesses, universities and research centres. An example is the support provided for the New Brunswick Research and Productivity Council (RPC) for its Revitalization Program. Objectives were to increase services to SMEs in all regions of New Brunswick and to improve financial viability. Volume, value and quality of work performed for SMEs have increased dramatically under the Revitalization Program. Annual volume increased from \$0.8 million in 1988 to \$2.6 million in 1992-93. Work for SMEs grew from 14 percent to 42 percent of total contract income. Half of the clients are from service sectors and there is a broader geographic distribution of RPC clients across the province. New services were introduced. Dependence on government contracts has decreased substantially and industrial work represents 76 percent of total contract income. Gains in financial viability were achieved from efforts to seek new business, improved management, an improved projection system, and prompt action to cut costs.

- **Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation**

In Newfoundland, the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation (CCFI) was established to create linkages between Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), the Marine Institute and the fishing industry to enhance the competitiveness of firms in that industry. The goal of the CCFI was to generate, within five years, some \$19.0 million of R&D spending. A significant portion of the investment was to be generated by the private sector of the fishing industry where research has traditionally been lower than average. The Centre has achieved

CHAPTER THREE

this goal in four years of operation and in so doing has generated over \$2.8 million in private sector sponsorship of research. Direct funding was provided by 85 private sector firms to some 135 CCFI research projects.

While the CCFI has an experienced professional and technical staff to work with the private sector, the real strength of the Centre is its ability to access the expertise of the MUN/Marine Institute. The CCFI is widely regarded as a repository of useful information about the fishing industry. Its mission specifically guides the Centre to apply fisheries-related expertise in MUN/Marine Institute to the problems of the fishing industry.

• Food Research Centre - New Brunswick

Food processing, primarily based on the fisheries and agricultural resources of the region, comprises the largest number of firms in the Atlantic Canada manufacturing sector. Much work has been done over the years to bring more value-added to these primary resources and, with the increasing number of food processing plants, comes the need to improve on the quality of the products as well as to develop new ones. The Food Research Centre based at l'Université de Moncton is one of the research centres which contributes to the development and strengthening of the food industry. It offers research and technical services in the development and testing of new products and offers information and solutions to problems met by the food industry. A survey of the Centre's clients shows the increase of the firms' competitiveness as the major impact that the Centre has had on the businesses using its services.

"The Food Research Centre offers services as diverse as research and development, information, food analysis and technical support and we welcome business leaders with new ideas and projects in food research. Now that we have the expertise, I dream of the day when entrepreneurs will come and establish their businesses here to develop and market new food products."

*Sister Auréa Cormier, Executive Director
Food Research Centre
Université de Moncton, New Brunswick*

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS

Over the last three years, the Atlantic region economy has suffered from a double blow: the recession and severe adjustment in resource-based industries, especially the fishery. Employment nationally has been slow to recover from the recession. The problem is particularly severe in the Atlantic region with unemployment currently over 15%. Despite the impact of the recession and the severe problems of the fishery, the growth of the Atlantic economy has matched that for the country as a whole over the 1987-92 period. In terms of GDP per capita, the gap has closed somewhat, from 71.6% of the Canadian average in 1987 to 75.4% in 1992.

The resources devoted to regional development have been small relative to the size of the problem. Funds utilized by ACOA in 1992-93 amount to less than 3% of total federal spending in the region. External evaluations of the economic impact of the Action and COOPERATION Programs, which together account for over 85% of the Agency's expenditures, demonstrate that Agency activity has made a major contribution to economic growth. These programs have resulted in an increase in 42,000 jobs over the 1987-92 period. The annual impact of these programs on GDP had reached \$1.4 billion by 1992. Agency activity accounted for about 85% of the narrowing of the disparity gap, as without Agency activity, the disparity gap in GDP per capita would have narrowed only marginally from 71.6% of the Canada average in 1987, to 72.2% in 1992. By 1992, the unemployment rate is 1% lower than it would have been without the Agency's activity. What is more, the productive investments supported by the Agency's programs result in long-term impact, with the addition to GDP peaking at \$2.1 billion in 1997 without further expenditures beyond current commitments. In terms of tax revenues alone, the programming more than pays for itself, as tax revenues over the 1987-99 period are projected to total \$3.8 billion as compared to \$2.0 billion in expenditures actual and projected.

At the time of ACOA's creation, regional development policy moved from a focus on disparities between regions to an approach designed to assist all regions to realize their economic potential. ACOA was expected to assist the region in overcoming severe structural problems in a number of areas.

The major expectation for ACOA was that it should stimulate entrepreneurship and small business development. The need for an improved decision-making process on applications for support was identified. At a time when the Atlantic economy was still struggling to emerge from the downturn of the early 1980s, ACOA was able to quickly put in place a small business support program tailored to the needs of the region. The application process was simplified for smaller projects. Decision-making authority was highly decentralized and

CHAPTER FOUR

front-line managers were empowered to assist entrepreneurs to turn their viable business ideas into reality.

The evaluation of the Action Program demonstrated that 85% of business clients found the information requirements easy to fulfil. In contrast, evaluation of the earlier IRDP reported that only 65% of clients found the application process easy.

"Well, ACOA's been a success story for New Brunswick and I believe for the rest of Canada. In spite of the fact that it has gone through growing pains, it's been an important instrument for progress here."

*Premier Frank McKenna
September 2, 1992
Fredericton, New Brunswick*

ACOA's Programs have targeted small and medium-sized businesses. Since 1989, over 75% of Action Program support has gone to projects under \$1 million in costs. Applications are over eight times the level of earlier programs. More than 80% of entrepreneurs supported by the Action and COOPERATION Programs indicated that their project was successful in meeting objectives. In addition, the success rate of ACOA-assisted projects is well above that for projects not supported by the Agency. Over 90% of new businesses established with ACOA support are successful, while close to 52% of new businesses in Atlantic Canada fail within the first three years of operation. By helping business succeed, ACOA has contributed to optimism and a new sense of confidence in the region as a place to do business.

Despite the Agency's contribution programs, the success of Atlantic business is constrained in part by a lack of equity capital. The supply of venture capital would have to at least double just to make it comparable to that available in Central Canada. ACOA has not yet effectively addressed the need to increase the supply of venture capital from private sources.

The Agency has introduced, on a pilot basis, a program to support training by Atlantic business. However, no appreciable increase in training activity has yet resulted. Given the importance of training for competitiveness and success, support for training needs to be improved.

CHAPTER FOUR

ACOA has provided broad-based support to business activities as a means of stimulating entrepreneurship and risk-taking. With scarce resources, consideration should be given to selective assistance for those activities most essential for competitiveness and growth, namely, the application of technology, marketing and training.

"An increasing number of Atlantic Canadians are finally realizing that our economic future is no longer the sole responsibility of provincial and federal governments. Entrepreneurs are gaining recognition for their efforts in stimulating the economy through their own job creation, which in essence creates employment not only for themselves but for others."

*Atlantic Lifestyle Business
Vol. 3, No. 3, 1992*

Entrepreneurship development is at the heart of ACOA's mission and goes well beyond financial assistance to business. The Agency's initiatives in the areas of promotion of the self-employment option, entrepreneurship education and the development of community-based support are beginning to show results. The Agency is making steady progress in its mission to renew the Atlantic entrepreneurial spirit. There is a steady increase in the intent of Atlantic Canadians to start their own business. The demand for self-employment and entrepreneurship development programs is also growing.

ACOA was expected to promote new partnerships between the public and private sectors and encourage the people of the region to participate more actively in development. Under the Action Program, in the first year, the Agency initiated over 300 partnership arrangements with the private sector to provide support to small business. There are many examples of economic sectors, such as finfish aquaculture in New Brunswick or software in Nova Scotia, where the private sector has moved to take charge of development. In areas such as entrepreneurship and tourism development, the Agency has obtained maximum leverage from its support through partnering with the private sector. By encouraging partnerships, ACOA has been able to increase leverage under the Action Program. For every ACOA dollar, the private sector directly invested \$1.70 in 1988-89 and increased it to \$2.30 in 1992-93.

However, the non-profit sector, such as universities, research institutes and business associations, has the potential to do much more. The Agency needs to find innovative ways to enlist its support in areas such as commercializing technology.

Within six months of its creation, ACOA moved quickly to assume the responsibility assigned to it for coordinating federal and provincial activities. It was successful in having the moratorium on ERDAs lifted. Recently, an external evaluation has concluded that the

COOPERATION Program has resulted in a more coordinated regional approach to economic development and that the process has been improved by the creation of ACOA with its Coordination activity.

However, there are a large number of business assistance programs with similar objectives and clientele. The Action and COOPERATION Program evaluations found that the overlap of programs and delivery organizations was perceived as a problem. As the Agency with the lead role for delivering assistance to small business in the Atlantic region, ACOA is in a position to provide leadership in efforts to streamline business assistance.

The success of ACOA's financial assistance programs allowed the Agency to build the credible presence required to effectively assume its Advocacy and Coordination roles. By 1992, some 77% of the region's population knew of the Agency and 65% believed it was successful in meeting its mandate of promoting long-term economic development.

ACOA has made important contributions in the area of federal government procurement with the latest available data indicating that federal purchases in the region are up significantly, as compared to the period prior to 1987. Another example of benefits from Advocacy is the trade area, where the Agency successfully advocated that regional development subsidies should be non-countervailable under the GATT.

The Agency's continuing efforts to understand the private sector's needs, combined with its broad mandate to promote the development of the region, give it a unique capability to bring together the resources and expertise of federal departments to pursue development opportunities or solve problems. The lead role taken by the Agency in the establishment of the Canada Business Service Centres is a recent example. The success of Advocacy efforts to maximize the benefits from Hibernia and the role played by the Agency in finding replacement activity for Summerside are also examples.

Despite these accomplishments, the Agency has not given the Advocacy role the attention it deserves, given that it can potentially have a greater impact than direct financial support to business. With increasingly scarce resources, ensuring that federal expenditures are making their maximum contribution to regional development becomes even more important.

ACOA's accomplishments have been largely due to the unique strengths that the regional agency approach brings to regional development policy. Because decisions are made in the region, with advice from Atlantic Canadians, the Agency is more responsive to local conditions and can act more quickly than its predecessors. The regional agency approach has proven to be particularly adept at reconciling federal priorities and regional development needs. The evaluation of the COOPERATION Program found that "federal-provincial

relations were stronger as a result of the Program" and that "the mechanism of a strong regionally-based federal agency with a mandate to coordinate economic development is necessary to address the region's challenges and changing economic circumstances".

Finally, the Agency is in a unique position to play a leadership role in the region. The Atlantic Geomatics Alliance, entrepreneurship development and tourism are examples of where ACOA has identified priorities and worked with partners to develop a coordinated regional approach. The Maritime provinces (in some instances with the involvement of Newfoundland) have adopted an agenda for regional cooperation in a number of important development areas. Because of its small population and economy, increased regional cooperation is essential if the Atlantic provinces are to compete effectively. As the only economic development department in the Atlantic region with a regional perspective and mandate, ACOA is in a position to play a greater role in improving region-wide cooperation. The recent introduction of the Pan-Atlantic Initiatives activity enables ACOA to put increasing emphasis on this role.

ACOA's priorities of Entrepreneurship Development, Trade and Marketing, Innovation and Technology Transfer, Human Resource Development, and Procurement have enabled it to bring an increasingly strategic focus to development of the region. The key strategic themes have played an increasing role in the prioritization of expenditures under the COOPERATION Program. Support under the Action Program has increasingly focused on marketing, innovation, labour and management training, advisory and diagnostic services and development of the capability to compete for government procurement opportunities.

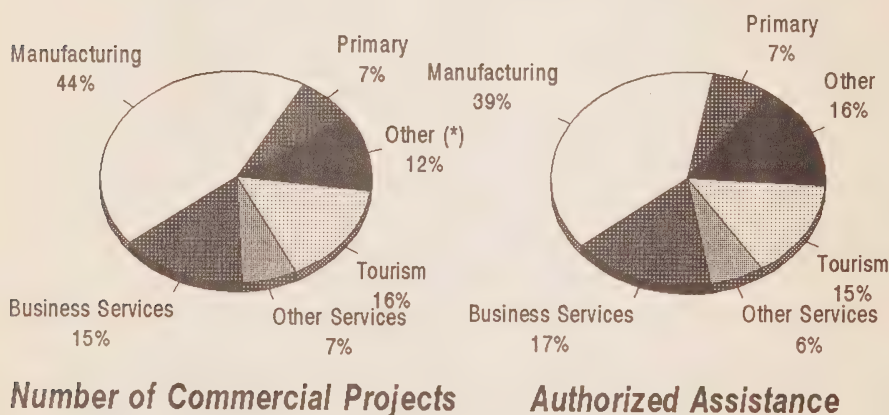
"There is little doubt that the Agency met the test. Indeed, it is remarkable what the Agency was able to accomplish in such a short period of time."

*Dr. Donald Savoie, Chairman
Canadian Research Institute on Regional
Development
Atlantic Lifestyle Business Magazine
Volume 2, No. 4, 1991*

ACTION PROGRAM
From Inception to March 31, 1993
By elements

	NUMBER OF PROJECTS		CONTRIBUTIONS (including interest buy down)	
	#	%	\$ M.	%
BUSINESS SUPPORT	1270	12.7%	211.24	25.7%
<u>CAPITAL</u>				
Establishment	1445	14.4%	202.14	24.6%
Expansion	1544	15.4%	116.62	14.2%
Modernization	1878	18.8%	128.43	15.6%
New Products	366	3.7%	28.45	3.5%
Sub-total	5233	52.3%	475.64	57.8%
<u>OPERATIONAL</u>				
Studies	2019	20.2%	29.94	3.6%
Innovation	509	5.1%	62.04	7.5%
Marketing	887	8.9%	40.99	5.0%
Supplier Dev.	83	0.8%	3.41	0.4%
Sub-total	3498	35.0%	136.38	16.6%
TOTAL	10001	100.0%	823.26	100.0%

ACOA - ACTION PROGRAM INDUSTRIAL SECTORS SUPPORTED From Inception to March 31, 1993



(*) - Includes a variety of projects in repairs and rentals of machinery and equipment, video and films, health research, projects in more than one sector, etc.

ACTION PROGRAM
From Inception to March 31, 1993
By size of projects (eligible costs)

NUMBER OF PROJECTS

	<u>Less than 200,000</u>		<u>\$200,000 to \$1.0 M.</u>		<u>Over \$1.0 M.</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
BUSINESS SUPPORT	1065	12.3%	169	14.9%	36	17.6%
CAPITAL						
Establishment	1175	13.6%	202	17.8%	68	33.2%
Expansion	1225	14.1%	270	23.7%	49	23.9%
Modernization	1596	18.4%	246	21.6%	36	17.6%
New Products	287	3.3%	71	6.2%	8	3.9%
Sub - total	4283	49.5%	789	69.3%	161	78.5%
OPERATIONAL						
Studies	2003	23.1%	16	1.4%	0	0.0%
Innovation	400	4.6%	102	9.0%	7	3.4%
Marketing	825	9.5%	62	5.4%	0	0.0%
Supplier Development	82	0.9%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%
Sub - total	3310	38.2%	180	15.8%	8	3.9%
TOTAL	8658	100.0%	1138	100.0%	205	100.0%

CONTRIBUTIONS IN \$M (including interest buy down)

	<u>Less than \$200,000</u>		<u>\$200,000 to \$1.0 M.</u>		<u>Over \$1.0 M.</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
BUSINESS SUPPORT	61.29	18.7%	45.92	24.1%	104.04	34.2%
CAPITAL						
Establishment	62.57	19.1%	35.44	18.6%	104.13	34.2%
Expansion	50.77	15.5%	32.11	16.8%	33.74	11.1%
Modernization	59.13	18.0%	30.57	16.0%	38.73	12.7%
New Products	14.19	4.3%	10.20	5.4%	4.06	1.3%
Sub - total	186.66	56.9%	108.32	56.8%	180.67	59.3%
OPERATIONAL						
Studies	26.47	8.1%	3.47	1.8%	0.00	0.0%
Innovation	18.13	5.5%	25.61	13.4%	18.30	6.0%
Marketing	33.66	10.3%	7.33	3.8%	0.00	0.0%
Supplier Development	1.91	0.6%	0.00	0.0%	1.50	0.5%
Sub - total	80.15	24.4%	36.41	19.1%	19.80	6.5%
TOTAL	328.11	100.0%	190.64	100.0%	304.52	100.0%

ACTION PROGRAM
TYPE OF ASSISTANCE
From Inception to March 31, 1993

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS

	CONTRI- BUTION	INTEREST BUY-DOWN	LOAN INSURANCE	ACTION LOAN
BUSINESS SUPPORT	1270	0	0	0
CAPITAL				
Establishment	1369	513	53	21
Expansion	1487	547	35	18
Modernization	1840	497	37	6
New products	351	131	11	8
OPERATIONEL				
Studies	2019	0	0	0
Innovation	507	0	0	2
Marketing	940	0	0	3
Supplier	83	0	0	0
TOTAL (*)	9866	1688	136	58

AUTHORIZED ASSISTANCE IN MILLION OF \$

BUSINESS SUPPORT	211.24	0.00	0.00	0.00
CAPITAL				
Establishment	163.15	38.99	44.85	8.31
Expansion	88.11	28.51	13.41	6.89
Modernization	97.30	31.13	15.36	2.37
New products	22.45	6.00	2.16	2.74
OPERATIONEL				
Studies	29.94	0.00	0.00	0.00
Innovation	62.04	0.00	0.00	0.25
Marketing	40.99	0.00	0.00	1.37
Supplier	3.41	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	718.63	104.63	75.77	21.93

(*) One project can have more than one application.

**COOPERATION PROGRAM
INITIATIVES SIGNED FROM JUNE 6, 1987 TO MARCH 31, 1993**

(millions of dollars)

<u>Province</u>	<u>Date Signed</u>	<u>Termination Date</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>Total Federal Cost</u>
<u>Newfoundland</u>				
Inshore Fisheries	22/02/88	31/03/93	60.0	42.0
Agri-Food Development	21/06/88	31/03/94	8.0	5.0
Rural Development III	21/07/89	31/03/94	29.6	21.0
Comprehensive Labrador	21/07/89	31/03/94	53.9	37.7
Mineral Development	01/01/90	31/03/94	17.5	12.3
Youth Forestry	09/02/90	31/03/93	11.25	9.0
Forestry Amend. #3	09/02/90	31/03/90	3.2	2.24
Ocean Industry Amend. #1	04/09/90	31/03/93	13.5	9.0
Forestry	04/03/91	31/03/95	64.3	45.0
Enterprise Network	20/03/91	31/03/94	7.2	5.0
Tourism-Historic Resources	17/05/91	31/03/95	20.0	14.0
Environmental Improvement	18/12/91	31/03/94	17.8	5.9
ALFI (extension)	19/12/91	30/09/92	0.823	0.686
Salmonid Cons. & Enhance.	30/04/92	31/03/94	39.1	27.4
Strategic Invest. & Ind. Dev.	26/06/92	31/03/96	30.6	22.05
Comprehensive Labrador Amend.	26/06/92	31/03/96	6.25	4.45
Development Planning	26/06/92	31/03/96	2.25	1.25
Cultural Industries	24/07/92	31/03/96	5.0	3.5
Salmonid Enhancement and Cons.	09/10/92	31/03/97	21.42	15.0
Tourism-Historic Res. Amend.	29/12/92	31/03/95	0.75	0.75
Human Resources Development	21/01/93	31/03/97	42.9	30.0
Strategic Investment Amend.	21/01/93	31/03/97	12.86	9.0
Total Newfoundland			468.2	322.3
<u>Nova Scotia</u>				
Highways (Non-ERDA)	20/07/87	31/03/91	100.0	50.0
Agri-Food Development	27/06/88	31/03/94	60.0	30.0
Halifax-Dartmouth Metro	27/09/88	31/03/95	209.2	79.6
Forestry	15/12/89	31/03/91	45.0	24.7
Fisheries	06/07/90	31/03/94	8.0	4.8
Minerals	20/07/90	31/03/92	9.0	5.0
Industrial Dev. Opportunities	17/12/90	31/03/95	63.0	31.5
Halifax-Metro Amendment	13/03/91	31/03/94	10.0	5.0
Sustainable Economic Dev.	18/03/91	31/03/95	15.0	9.0
Fisheries Amendment #1	09/04/91	31/03/94	5.2	2.4
Highway Amendment #1	20/08/91	31/03/92	3.0	1.5
ALFI (Extension)	29/11/91	30/09/92	1.93	1.54
Tourism	04/12/91	31/03/95	19.3	10.9
Forestry Development	10/01/92	31/03/95	98.0	49.0
Highway Amendment #2	21/02/92	31/03/94	34.0	17.0
Recreational Fishery Planning	23/06/92	31/03/93	0.60	0.50
Mineral Development	27/08/92	31/03/95	10.0	7.0
Cultural Development	27/08/92	31/03/95	5.0	2.5
Technology Development	19/11/92	31/03/97	35.7	25.0
Economic Policy and Planning	19/11/92	31/03/96	2.0	1.0
Total Nova Scotia			733.93	357.94

**COOPERATION PROGRAM
INITIATIVES SIGNED FROM JUNE 6, 1987 TO MARCH 31, 1993**

	(millions of dollars)			Total
<u>Province</u>	<u>Date Signed</u>	<u>Termination Date</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>Federal Cost</u>
<u>New Brunswick</u>				
Transportation (Non-ERDA)	29/06/87	31/03/92	150.1	105.0
Agri-Food Development	06/10/89	31/03/94	32.0	20.0
Fisheries Development	03/11/89	31/03/94	19.6	11.7
Forestry Development	15/12/89	31/03/94	91.0	50.0
Planning	06/02/90	31/03/94	2.0	1.0
Special Response	10/05/90	31/03/91	2.3	1.5
Bi-Capitol	10/08/90	31/03/95	8.3	8.3
Economic Diversification	16/08/90	31/03/95	36.2	23.5
Cultural Development	11/10/90	31/03/95	5.0	2.5
Mineral Development	12/09/90	31/03/95	10.0	6.0
Urban Economic Development	12/09/90	31/03/95	46.0	23.0
Industrial Development	12/09/90	31/03/92	10.0	5.0
ALFI (Extension)	06/12/91	30/09/92	2.25	1.8
Recreational Fishery	07/08/92	31/03/96	15.0	15.0
Tourism - Travel Generators	23/07/92	31/03/94	5.7	4.0
Highway Improvement Amendment	28/07/92	31/03/96	37.9	26.3
Entrepreneurship and HRD	23/07/92	31/03/97	25.8	17.0
Planning Amendment	23/07/92	31/03/97	3.0	1.5
Economic Development	23/07/92	31/03/97	38.0	25.0
Economic Diversif. Amend.# 1	04/08/92	31/03/97	29.6	19.2
Total New Brunswick			569.8	367.3
<u>Prince Edward Island</u>				
Forest Resource Development	23/06/88	31/03/93	24.1	14.2
Agriculture Development	06/10/89	31/03/94	25.0	14.0
Fisheries Development	20/10/89	31/03/95	10.6	7.5
Transportation	20/10/89	31/03/94	30.0	15.0
Alternate Energy	12/02/90	31/03/94	7.8	5.5
Market Development	30/03/90	30/09/90	1.4	1.0
Industrial Dev. Amendment #1	30/03/90	31/03/92	20.0	14.0
Cultural Development	02/08/90	31/03/94	3.55	2.5
Industrial Dev. Amendment #2	10/10/90	31/03/92	10.0	7.0
Planning	12/06/91	31/03/95	1.0	0.5
Rural Economic Development	12/06/91	31/03/95	3.1	2.0
Cultural Dev. Amendment #1	31/07/91	31/03/94	3.0	2.0
Tourism	30/10/91	31/03/95	9.0	5.2
ALFI (Extension)	21/11/91	30/09/92	2.46	1.97
Market Development	05/12/91	31/03/95	9.4	5.2
Strategic Technology	05/12/91	31/03/95	4.0	2.8
Sustainable Economic Dev.	08/10/92	31/03/96	9.5	6.6
Industrial Economic Dev.	08/10/92	31/03/97	30.4	21.28
Cultural Dev. Amendment	10/12/92	31/03/95	2.2	1.2
Total Prince Edward Island			206.5	129.5

COOPERATION PROGRAM
INITIATIVES SIGNED FROM JUNE 6, 1987 TO MARCH 31, 1993
(millions of dollars)

<u>Province</u>	<u>Date Signed</u>	<u>Termination Date</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>Total Federal Cost</u>
<u>Pan-Atlantic</u>				
Int'l Tourism-Marketing	17/07/91	31/03/94	10.0	6.0
Communications	21/01/92	31/03/92	1.0	1.0
Entrepreneurship	03/12/92	31/03/97	4.5	4.5
Coordination and Research	03/12/92	31/03/97	2.0	2.0
Communications	18/06/92	31/03/95	3.0	3.0
Total Pan-Atlantic			20.5	16.5
Grand Total			1,998.933	1,193.456

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACOA	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
AEP	Atlantic Enterprise Program
ALFI	Atlantic Livestock and Feed Initiative
ASN	Atlantic Satellite Network
CADMI	Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing Insititute
CCFI	Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation
CCMC	Canadian Centre for Marine Communications
CBTUA	Cape Breton Topping-Up Assistance
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSA	Canadian Space Agency
DND	Department of National Defence
DRIE	Department of Regional Industrial Expansion
EC	European Community
ECBC	Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation
ERDA	Economic and Regional Development Agreement
FAP	Fisheries Alternatives Program
GATT	General Agreement on Tarrifs and Trade
GDA	General Development Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GST	Goods and Services Tax
HMDC	Hibernia Management and Development Company
HRD	Human Resource Development
IRDP	Industrial and Regional Development Program
LMRI	Land Resource Management Information
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MITV	Maritime Independent Television
MOPITT	Measurement of Pollution in the Troposphere
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MUN	Memorial University of Newfoundland
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NOIA	Newfoundland Ocean Industries Association
NRC	National Research Council
OGD	Other Government Department
PMAC	Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada
R&D	Research and Development
RPC	Research and Productivity Council
SIANS	Software Industry Association of Nova Scotia
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
TPI	Technical People in Industry
UCCB	University College of Cape Breton

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ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

REPORT TO PARLIAMENT

1993-1998



Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Canada

*Building a stronger economy together
Ensemble, pour une économie plus forte*

Additional copies of *ACOA's Five-Year Report to Parliament 1993-1998* are available upon request from:

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)

P.O. Box 6051
Moncton
New Brunswick
E1C 9J8

This document is available on the ACOA Internet site at the following address:
<http://www.acoa.ca>

A technical appendix providing the economic impact calculation is available upon request. Any enquiries regarding this publication should be directed to the above address, or by calling 1-800-561-7862.

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CAT #	C89-4/48-1998
ISBN	0-662-63789-5

Minister's Message

Without doubt, Canada's success in the 21st Century will depend on the knowledge, skills and competitive business practices which Canadians, in every part of the country, acquire today. One of the most important priorities of the Government of Canada is to ensure that the resources which facilitate and accelerate competitiveness are available to everyone, everywhere.

The Industry Portfolio brings together 13 departments and agencies to do just that. They are responsible, collectively, for science and technology, market development, regional economic policy and economic development. Working closely with their partners at the federal and provincial government levels, and in the private sector, Portfolio members promote the national agenda of entrepreneurship development, innovation, trade and opportunities for youth employment in emerging, cutting-edge fields of industry.



My priority is simple: to ensure that the Portfolio provides real and relevant assistance to Canadians as they meet the challenges of the global economy and exploit the opportunities it presents.

As a member of the Portfolio, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency works to deliver the federal agenda of jobs and growth to the Atlantic provinces. The Agency's involvement, at the national level, in economic planning and policy development has not only raised Atlantic Canada's profile on the national stage, but also enabled valuable federal government resources to find their way directly into Atlantic communities and private enterprises. In doing so, ACOA contributes significantly to the strength of both the regional and national economies. This report demonstrates the clear and compelling progress achieved over the past five years.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J Manley', located below the main body of text and to the left of the printed name.

The Honourable John Manley
Minister Responsible for
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Secretary of State's Message



The past five years have brought profound change to the people, communities and businesses of Atlantic Canada. It has been a period of challenge and opportunity for everyone. As the federal government agency dedicated to helping Atlantic Canadians succeed, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency has played an important role in preparing the region to meet its challenges and embrace its opportunities with determination, knowledge and skill.

ACOA has become more focused on the business development needs of small- and medium-sized firms which, in the last ten years, represented more than 95 per cent of new businesses created in the region, and on the economic environment which supports entrepreneurial start-ups and growth. More people are starting businesses, and finding the businesses development resources they need – in entrepreneurship, innovation and technology, trade, business management practices and access to capital and information – to thrive in the region.

ACOA's collaborative approach to economic development, which relies on extensive partnerships with provincial governments, community economic development organizations, the research and development community and the private sector, has materially contributed to strengthening the Atlantic economy.

ACOA will continue its work on behalf of all Atlantic Canadians in a manner consistent with the Government of Canada's Jobs and Growth agenda, which recognizes that strong regional economies are the building blocks of a strong national economy.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fred J. Mifflin".

The Honourable Fred J. Mifflin, P.C., M.P.
Secretary of State,
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Introduction	1
Section I: The Agency.....	4
Chapter One: The 1993-1998 Context	4
Chapter Two: How ACOA Pursues Its Mandate	8
Section II: ACOA at Work.....	16
Chapter Three: Innovation, Technology and Skills Development.....	17
Chapter Four: Small Business Development	27
Chapter Five: Entrepreneurship.....	34
Chapter Six: Tourism.....	40
Chapter Seven: Trade	45
Chapter Eight: Community-Based Economic Development (CBED).....	47
Chapter Nine: ACOA as Federal Delivery Agent	57
Chapter Ten: Policy Research and Analysis Initiatives	60
Section III: Overall Impact.....	63
Chapter Eleven: Atlantic Economic Growth and ACOA's Impact.....	63
Chapter Twelve: Employment Impact	66
Chapter Thirteen: Overall Economic Impact	68
Conclusion	72
Bibliography	73

Acronyms or Abbreviations Used in the Report

ACTGA:	Atlantic Canada Tourism Grading Authority
ACTP:	Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership
AMT:	Advanced Medical Technologies (Prince Edward Island)
BBI:	Black Business Initiative (Nova Scotia)
BDP:	Business Development Program (ACOA program)
CADCAM:	Computer Assisted Design / Computer Assisted Manufacturing
CBCEDA:	Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority
CBDCs:	Community Business Development Corporations
CBED:	Community-Based Economic Development (ACOA service line)
CBSCs:	Canada Business Service Centres (national program)
CCFI:	Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation (Newfoundland & Labrador)
CDC:	Central Development Corporation (Prince Edward Island)
CEED:	Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development (Nova Scotia)
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
CFB:	Canadian Forces Base
CIDA:	Canadian International Development Agency (national agency)
CIWP:	Canada Infrastructure Works Program (national program)
CN:	Canadian National
CPDA:	Cornwallis Park Development Agency
CSA:	Canadian Space Agency
CSA STEAR:	Canadian Space Agency -Strategic Technologies for Automation and Robotics
ECBC:	Entreprise Cape Breton Corporation
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GMEC:	Greater Moncton Economic Commission (New Brunswick)
IBD:	International Business Development (ACOA program)
IRB:	Industrial and Regional Benefits (national program)
ISO:	International Standards Organization (as in ISO9000)
IT:	Information Technology
JEDI:	Joint Economic Development Initiative (New Brunswick)
KEP:	Knowledge Economy Partnership (Prince Edward Island)
MUN:	Memorial University of Newfoundland
NBTGI:	New Brunswick Training Group Inc.
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (international)
R&D:	Research and Development
REDBs:	Regional Economic Development Boards (Newfoundland & Labrador)
SENCEN:	Strait East Nova Community Enterprise Network (Nova Scotia)
SMEs:	Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses
STANet:	Science and Technology Awareness Network (Nova Scotia)
STEM-Net:	Science, Technology, Education, Mathematics Network (Nfld & Lab.)
TARA:	Telecom Application and Research Alliance (Nova Scotia)
UCCB:	University College of Cape Breton
UdeM:	Université de Moncton

Executive Summary

ACOA was created in 1987 to coordinate and implement the federal government's economic development initiatives in Atlantic Canada. It was part of a broader move by the Government of Canada towards a decentralized, regionally-based approach to economic development. In keeping with this approach, the Agency's head office was located in Moncton, New Brunswick. The Agency's mandate is to act as the federal government's agent in increasing opportunity for economic development in Atlantic Canada. In fulfilling its mandate, ACOA was to be guided by the principle that sustained economic development must come from within the region, and that Atlantic Canadians should be encouraged to take greater responsibility for this development with the federal government as a partner.

Independent evaluations of ACOA's first five years showed that ACOA had been more responsive than earlier centralized approaches to regional needs as programs had been designed in consultation with Atlantic Canadians. ACOA's first-hand knowledge of regional conditions had enabled it to reconcile local development needs with federal priorities.

During its second five-year period, ACOA has built on the strengths of this regionalized approach. In response to the external environment in which it works, federal economic development priorities and the unique needs of the Atlantic region, the Agency has revisited and strengthened its overall approach in order to improve its effectiveness.

A number of major themes summarize this evolution:

1. ACOA has increasingly sought out partners in the private sector, communities, and provincial and federal governments to stimulate economic development. The Agency's mission is "to work in partnership with the people of Atlantic Canada toward the long-term economic development of the region." Partnerships engage a variety of resources, experiences and skills. For example, in the community economic development area, close to 1,200 dedicated volunteers direct the activities of the organizations partnering with ACOA. ACOA's role in these partnerships can be as leader, coordinator, or active participant.
2. Increased emphasis on community and rural economic development. To encourage Atlantic Canadians to accept greater responsibility for economic development, the Agency works with communities where local creativity and initiative is shown. The Agency's aim is to strengthen the capacity of local organizations to plan and implement their economic priorities. In support of the federal government's priority on rural renewal, the Agency has put in place measures to address the special challenges of rural areas.

3. Increased role as a delivery agent for federal economic development programs. The success of a program depends on workable design and delivery at the local level. ACOA, with its extensive network in the region, increasingly has taken on the delivery of federal government programs such as the Canada Infrastructure Works Program, the Canada Business Services Centres and the Canadian Forces Base Closure Adjustment Program.
4. Increasing emphasis on bringing national policies and programs to bear on the unique needs of the region. With a broad mandate for economic development, ACOA is in a unique position to play a leadership role for the federal government in the Atlantic region. An example is the responsibility the Agency has taken for bringing federal programs to the support of major opportunities such as offshore oil and gas development. The creation of the Industry Portfolio has brought greater coordination among federal economic development departments and strengthened ACOA's capacity to tailor federal programs to regional needs.
5. A more integrated region-wide approach to development. ACOA has been able to bring about a region-wide approach in a number of areas such as tourism and export development. This Atlantic agenda is crucial for effectiveness in an area comprising four provincial governments and a small widely-dispersed population.
6. ACOA's support to SMEs has become more diverse and sophisticated. As a member of the Industry Portfolio, the Agency implements the priorities of the federal government's Jobs and Growth agenda. ACOA support includes programs designed to help Atlantic SMEs compete in the global knowledge-based economy through support for innovation and technology skills development, export market development and improved information and services to SMEs. In its entrepreneurship development and SME support activity, the Agency has tailored programs to the needs of special communities such as Aboriginals and youth.

In fiscal year 1997-98, direct financial assistance to business accounted for less than 40% of ACOA's expenditures. The majority of expenditures are used to fund shared programs with partners such as business associations, provincial governments, universities and community economic development organizations in support of small business development.

7. Increasing focus on "value for money". Agency program spending is very small in relative terms, representing only 1.5% of total federal spending in Atlantic Canada in 1996. Therefore, if the Agency is to make an impact, it is crucial that expenditures focus on those areas which provide the greatest benefits to the regional economy. Accordingly, spending has been increasingly focussed on the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), rather than on resource development or infrastructure. Analyses have shown that assistance to SMEs is easily the most cost-effective approach to economic development.

By implementing locally-developed approaches, ACOA and its partners have produced considerable benefits for the region, as evidenced in the following sections.

Economic Impact of ACOA Activity

ACOA's impact is more evident when comparing the gains achieved by its clients against the region's performance. For example, Statistics Canada has estimated that total business employment in Atlantic Canada declined by about 6% from 1989 to 1995, but that employment by ACOA clients increased by 9.5%.

The following results are based on external evaluations and analyses. An audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers concluded that these estimates were reasonable and likely conservative:

- from 1992 to 1997, the impact of ACOA programming on Atlantic GDP has grown from \$1.4 billion to \$3.7 billion a year;
- over the ten years of its operations, every \$1.00 of ACOA spending under the Business Development Program, Community-Based Economic Development, and the COOPERATION Program generated \$5.00 of GDP impact;
- from 1988 to 1997, the Conference Board of Canada's model has calculated that ACOA program spending of \$3.2 billion generated \$3.9 billion in personal income taxes and sales taxes;
- the Atlantic unemployment rate is 2.8% lower due to ACOA programming than it would have been without that programming.

From 1992 to 1997, earned income per capita improved from 74.2% of the national average to 75.5%. This is a continuation of a long-term trend that began in 1961. However, because ACOA expenditures represent less than 1% of Atlantic income (as measured by Gross Domestic Product) such aggregate measures do not accurately reflect the impact of ACOA programming. In fact, the gains achieved by recipients of ACOA programs have been largely overshadowed by restructuring in the economy, especially the collapse of the groundfish fishery, which occasioned the largest employment loss in an industrial sector in Canadian history.

Some Specific Examples of ACOA at Work

Perhaps, the best appreciation of the impact of ACOA's activities on the economic development of the region is obtained by looking at those areas where the Agency has focussed its efforts.

ACOA support for economic development is wide and multi-layered. No part of it is self-contained; projects have an impact across a wide spectrum. Assistance to a business, for example, is also assistance to the community where that business resides. Or, assistance to a community to develop a tourist attraction is assistance to the tourism industry. It is important to remember this in reading the following summary, which is split into several main groups.

Technology: Understanding and using modern technologies is a critical part of successful economic development. "Knowledge-based" industries have been growing faster than the overall economy everywhere, and it is important that Atlantic Canada be part of this growth. ACOA has supported technology and innovation in four main ways:

1. Helping companies innovate; for example, by supporting the lengthy process of developing then marketing technology-based commercial products, assisting the development of multimedia companies in Cape Breton, or linking traditional industries, like the Newfoundland fishery, with centres of research and innovation;
2. Helping workers develop technical skills; for example by providing support to the Aviation Maintenance Institute to develop skills for Prince Edward Island's fledgling aerospace industry, or helping New Brunswick forest product workers adapt their skills to new technologies;
3. Helping people understand and use technology and science; by helping build a series of provincial networks that improve access to technology and information by means of special communications systems. Examples are the STEM~Net system in Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island's Knowledge Economy Partnership, and Nova Scotia's STANet. In each case, ACOA has joined provincial and private sector partners in long-term programs of support to improve access to technology. That in one case (STEM~Net), it has become the standard for Industry Canada's national SchoolNet project;
4. Helping build alliances for technology development; like the Clinical Trials Atlantic Corporation, a knowledge-based cluster of universities and teaching hospitals that performs clinical tests on new pharmaceutical products.

Small- and Medium-Sized Business: Over 95% of businesses created in Atlantic Canada between 1989 and 1995 had less than 100 employees (90% had less than 20). New and existing SMEs were responsible for 58% of new jobs in Atlantic Canada.

SMEs, unfortunately, have a high failure rate in their first few years of existence, and thus find it difficult to attract capital to start and grow, and to get the right advice. Overcoming these hurdles is one of ACOA's priorities. It has been successful at doing this. Statistics Canada tabulations show that survival rates for ACOA manufacturing clients are higher in the first three years of business than they are for all manufacturing companies.

ACOA's main tool for assistance to SMEs is the Business Development Program. It offers interest-free, unsecured loans, which are repayable since early 1995. Over the 1993-1998 period, the Business Development Program has supported the creation or maintenance of almost 44,000 jobs. Client surveys indicate that without ACOA assistance only 5% of investments would have gone ahead as planned.

ACOA also offers advice and information through a network of Canada Business Service Centres, that dealt with over 80,000 enquiries in 1997/98 alone, by fax, phone, Internet or in person. Apart from these generic forms of assistance, ACOA also has programs to improve SME business management practices (through quality management programs, self-help diagnostic tools and workplace literacy, for example) and to assist SMEs gain better access to federal procurement contracts.

Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurs are at the heart of Atlantic economic development, and ACOA's Entrepreneurship Strategy has been described by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development as unique "... because it makes the promotion of entrepreneurship an explicitly stated objective ... [The] strategy is a long-term one, yet early results are promising."

The Strategy has five key components:

1. Research into the nature of entrepreneurship;
2. Making people more aware of entrepreneurship as an employment alternative;
3. Orienting and educating people to become entrepreneurs;
4. Training and counselling entrepreneurs; and
5. Building networks and SME support organizations.

One measure of the success of ACOA's approach to entrepreneur development is that in 1991, only 7% of Atlantic Canadians expressed the intent to form a small business, but by 1997 this proportion was 16%. While it is difficult to determine ACOA's precise impact, its activity is certainly a major contributing factor to this change.

Projects have been tailored to communities with special needs, and young people. As examples of the former, a project was designed to develop entrepreneurial skills for the Black community in Nova Scotia, and another for Aboriginal people in New Brunswick. The New Brunswick project involved a partnership with the Aboriginal community, the provincial government, the Business Development Bank of Canada, and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Young people have been introduced to entrepreneurship by the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development in Nova Scotia, and by Enterprise Centres at the YMCA and YWCA in St. John's and Glace Bay.

Tourism: ACOA has fostered a regional approach, using mechanisms like the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership (ACTP), for promotion of regional tourism; the Atlantic Canada Tourism Grading Authority, to bring standardized quality ratings to tourist accommodations; and the Atlantic Canada Tourism Showcase, for tourism operators to meet potential buyers such as bus associations. In each of these three cases, ACOA formed a partnership with provincial tourism departments and industry associations to take advantage of economies of scale in what has traditionally been a very fragmented industry. Promotions through ACTP alone are estimated to have brought in \$66 million in incremental tourism revenues from 1994 through 1997. These promotions have resulted in a significant return on the expenditure of public funds. For instance, the 1997 international campaign resulted in close to six dollars of tourist expenditures for every dollar spent on promotion.

ACOA has also supported specific tourism-related projects. The organization of the Celtic Colours Festival in Cape Breton, a celebration of music and culture that began in 1997, was an attempt to extend the tourism season in that region. Another initiative involved joining public and private sector partners in developing world-class tourism products in Bouctouche, New Brunswick. This area is now attracting international recognition for its mixture of ecological and cultural destinations. A third initiative involved support of local development associations in Newfoundland in the development of the Viking Trail, partly in preparation for the Viking Millennium celebrations in 2000.

Trade: One of ACOA's main thrusts has been to get all the provinces working together. An International Business Development Agreement was signed in 1994, and extended in 1997, involving three federal departments and the four provincial governments. It aims to improve access to export markets by SMEs, by increasing their export experience and taking advantage of economies of scale in exporting. A survey of SME participants has shown that 39% have started exporting or have increased their exports due to the IBD Agreement.

Specific trade initiatives have included export training and education services such as the New Brunswick Training Group Inc.

Community-Based Economic Development (CBED): Increasingly ACOA has encouraged communities to take more responsibility for their own development, strengthening local networks of volunteers, building local capacities to make and implement strategic plans that are based on realistic appraisals of community assets and aspirations, and that help communities realize their potential. This approach emphasizes local collective action.

Specific ways that ACOA has become involved in this challenge include its administration of the community development component of the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS), and by assuming responsibility for the Community Futures Program and the Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) in 1995. These

are not-for-profit, locally-run organizations which lend money and advise businesses in rural communities. Over the 1995-98 period, CBDC lending has supported the creation or maintenance of over 7,000 jobs in rural communities.

In recent years, the structure of local development agencies has been reformed in three of the four provinces. Newfoundland's system, is still being re-formed, although a new structure of Regional Economic Development Boards is largely in place and each board is preparing strategic plans. This is the latest step in a process that began in Newfoundland in 1992, emphasizing the long-term nature of this kind of development.

There are a number of examples of how communities have developed their economic bases in Atlantic Canada. Greater Moncton, for example, has substantially recovered from the loss of the CN repair shops in 1988, and is now a centre for teleservice (call centres). Local entrepreneurs are rapidly developing technology-based products and services. This has happened in a framework of a series of strategic plans, implemented by mobilizing local volunteers, and encouraged by a series of flexible partnerships that have included ACOA, the provincial government, local development agencies, the Université de Moncton, local community college campuses, and businesses.

There are other examples of ACOA involvement in community projects. The community of Victoria in Prince Edward Island rallied around a project to repair its dilapidated wharf, a traditional focus of community life and business. ACOA helped an Acadian community in Cape Breton set up La Picasse, an economic centre that is now home to a call centre, an entrepreneurial development centre, and several other businesses. The Colony of Avalon project in Newfoundland strives to develop an historic site for tourism while financing ongoing archaeological work. Five rural counties in eastern Nova Scotia were supported in setting up an integrated information technology centre to improve public and business access to IT. Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation in partnership with the Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority has set up a program to market Cape Breton as a good place to retire. By late 1997, some 68 new households had been set up as a result of these marketing efforts, worth an estimated \$1.3 million to the Cape Breton economy.

ACOA as Federal Delivery Agent: Taking on many more responsibilities in delivering and coordinating federal programs in the region has typified ACOA's second five-year period. It is a role that is natural given its familiarity with Atlantic Canada. It also means much more interaction with other federal agencies and departments.

The Agency was a natural choice, for example, to administer the Canada Infrastructure Works Program. Other examples are the programs put in place to help communities adjust after losing military bases in the early and mid-1990s due to federal budget cuts such as CFB Summerside and CFB Cornwallis, both of which have been transformed into diversified industrial parks, with public sector employment largely replaced by private sector.

Policy Research and Analysis: ACOA has always maintained a policy analysis and research capability, using both internal resources and independent contractors. The three essential qualities of this research have been:

1. Involvement of the private sector;
2. Extensive consultation; and
3. Keeping an eye on the future.

A Pan-Atlantic Economic Coordination and Research Initiative was first approved in 1992, and has been extended through 1999-2000. Its purpose is to enhance ACOA's capability to coordinate and plan federal activities that contribute to Atlantic Canada's economic growth. During the mid-1990s, a major research thrust has been a series of studies to gauge Atlantic Canada's competitiveness against other parts of North America and Europe, with very favourable results. ACOA has enlisted outside partners (like universities and business groups) to organize a series of Roundtables, each addressing a particular issue like community economic development or entrepreneurship. Reports on policy research have reached a wide audience both inside and outside Atlantic Canada.

ACOA has pursued its mandate in many areas that have been adopted by the Government of Canada as matters of national priority including support for rural and Aboriginal communities, science and technology, governments working in partnerships, young people, and expanding trade. This has involved a constant evolution of the Agency's programs, operations, and role. Much work remains to be done, however, in developing the Atlantic economy, and this will require commitment from all partners.

Introduction

Purpose of the Report

This report, which provides an evaluation of the impact of ACOA's activities has been prepared pursuant to Sub-sections 21 (2) and (2.1) of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Act which require that every five years the Minister for the Agency present to Parliament a comprehensive report on Agency achievements. This second five-year report covers the financial commitments, expenditures and activities of the Agency from April 1, 1993 until March 31, 1998.

ACOA was created in 1987 to coordinate and implement the federal government's economic development initiatives in Atlantic Canada. It was part of a broader move by the Government of Canada towards a decentralized, regionally-based approach to economic development. In keeping with this approach, the Agency's head office was located in Moncton, New Brunswick. ACOA was to be guided by the principle that sustained economic development must come from within the region, and that Atlantic Canadians should be encouraged to take greater responsibility for this development with the federal government as a partner.

A number of characteristics have emerged in the past ten years that underlie how ACOA approaches its mandate.

Working at the Regional Level

Independent reviews of ACOA's first five years showed that the Agency made a number of contributions to support job creation, to enhance the success rate of new businesses, to promote growth of regional gross domestic product (GDP), and to help reduce regional disparity.¹

These evaluations have also shown that ACOA has been more responsive to regional needs as programs have been designed in consultation with Atlantic Canadians. In addition, ACOA has played a role in the development and delivery of programs of other federal departments. The regional approach has resulted in an enhanced federal role in relations with the provinces.

Federal Leadership Role

With a broad mandate for economic development across the Atlantic region, ACOA is in a unique position to play a leadership role for the federal government. For example, as the federal government's agent for economic development in the region, the Agency increasingly has taken

ACOA Mandate

To increase opportunity for economic development in Atlantic Canada and, more particularly, to enhance the growth of earned incomes and employment opportunities in that region.

The Government Organization Act, Atlantic Canada, 1987, Part I, Section 4

¹ Action Program Evaluation Summary Report, Price Waterhouse, November 1992, The Evaluation of the ACOA COOPERATION Program, Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group, 1994, and ACOA, Five-Year Report to Parliament 1988-1993, February, 1994.

responsibility for bringing federal programs to the support of major economic opportunities such as offshore oil and gas development and the construction of the Confederation Bridge.

ACOA is a catalyst to prepare and encourage businesses to take advantage of the opportunities arising from the construction and operation of the offshore and onshore components of the Sable Gas Project. The Agency also is engaged in the identification and development of business opportunities arising from the further processing and use of the gas and gas liquids from offshore development.

Partnerships

Regional economic disparity is a complex, multi-dimensional challenge, and partnerships offer the most effective and efficient means to meet this challenge. ACOA's work with other economic development institutions is constantly being strengthened.

Partnerships have increased the Agency's capacity to meet its broad mandate while resources available to do this have been restrained. These partnerships have provided opportunities to reduce duplication, to draw on the strengths of each partner, to remain connected to regional development needs, and to create synergy.

Working with Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises

ACOA's activities, whether skills training, business counselling, trade promotion, or access to capital, are directed at enhancing the competitive strength of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region. SMEs create the larger share (58%) of new jobs in Atlantic Canada, making them critical in economic development.

"... the Agency has gone beyond most current practices for measuring and reporting results of economic development programs."

Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons, November 1995. Suggestions from the Auditor General have been incorporated into ACOA's evaluation systems.

Community Empowerment

ACOA's creation was a major step in bringing development decision-making closer to the community level. ACOA has moved to decentralize closer to communities and individual businesses. Examples, such as the strengthening of community development organizations and increases in shared program delivery, are described in Chapter Eight, and show how decentralization helps communities build their development capacities.

Accountability

ACOA is the only federal economic development agency or department legally required to provide a five-year report to Parliament, with an account of achievements from all its activities. Developing the tools to do this has been a priority for the Agency.

This is consistent with the federal government's increased emphasis on departmental accountability. In keeping with federal reporting requirements, ACOA has continued to develop its system of performance measurement. To help do this, it uses tools such as the Conference Board of Canada's econometric models, third party evaluations, client surveys, and Statistics Canada monitoring of clients. These have helped ACOA establish reliable indicators of the economic benefits of its programs, which have been used to refine and improve programs and provide information to Parliament.

Report Overview

This introduction has provided a brief overview of principal characteristics underlying ACOA's work and evolution. In Section I, Chapter One traces the development and context of the Agency from 1993 to 1998, highlighting critical changes in how ACOA achieves its mandate. Chapter Two describes the tools being used by ACOA to do its work.

Section II describes examples of how ACOA and its partners have created opportunities for increased economic development in Atlantic Canada. Section III estimates the overall impact of ACOA's programs on the Atlantic economy.

Section I: The Agency

Chapter 1

The 1993-1998 Context

Since 1993 ACOA has evolved in response to a number of factors. There has been a more targeted, cost-effective federal approach to economic development, for example, and the Agency has learned and applied many lessons over a decade of working in Atlantic Canada. External economic circumstances have also prompted change. ACOA is constantly adapting to ensure its programs help Atlantic businesses and communities benefit from developments in the global economy.

This Chapter provides a chronology of ACOA's evolution since 1993, and describes the factors behind the changes.

1993 – A New Federal Government Approach

ACOA's second five years coincided with the election of a new federal government. The policy document, *Creating Opportunity (The Red Book)*, addressed the regional economic development priorities of the new government, stating the need to adapt to the unique demands of communities where business decisions are made. Equally, *Creating Opportunity* emphasized that a strong national economy depends on strong regional economies. This support for Community-Based Economic Development (CBED) was an opportunity for ACOA to focus more of its energies to help communities take more responsibility for their own economic development.

ACOA's Strategic Priorities:

- Innovation and Technology
- Access to Capital and Information
- Business Management Practices
- Entrepreneurship Development
- Tourism
- Trade

To do this, ACOA works with communities to help organize local groups, identify local resources, and link communities with other resources in provincial and other federal departments. ACOA also has partnered with community organizations to deliver business development programs to small businesses in areas that complement the Agency's own assistance programs. This has ensured that ACOA programs are consistent with community priorities and that program delivery is cost-effective.

ACOA's priorities corresponded well with the economic development themes laid out in *Creating Opportunity*. Similarities included emphasizing the critical development role of SMEs, the need to develop entrepreneurship, the regional approach to economic development, and the need for government to work creatively, but responsibly, to improve access to capital for SMEs.

1994 and 1995 – Program Review

Two stages of Program Review were conducted in all federal departments and agencies to streamline operations and prioritize key activities. At ACOA, these reviews resulted in a comprehensive process of internal program evaluation and priority setting to improve Agency effectiveness.

To improve service to business clients and provide more consistent service throughout the region, the Agency began developing a single, more flexible business assistance program. In 1995, the Business Development Program (BDP) replaced the Action and Fisheries Alternatives programs, and the COOPERATION program focussed more on investments that bring benefits to an industry, a sector, or a community. In this more flexible approach, direct support to businesses took the form of fully repayable interest-free loans. There was continued focus on manufacturing and business services, a new focus on knowledge-based and technology industries, and on firms seeking to develop new products or services or preparing to export. This approach placed greater emphasis on the longer-term economic viability of ACOA's clients.

The region now depends less on federal spending. For Atlantic Canada as a whole, net dependence on federal spending dropped from 40% of GDP in 1980 to 20% in 1995.² ACOA spending was 1.5% of total federal spending in 1996. With spending constrained, the Agency has focussed on activities offering the best value for money. The chart (based on external evaluations) shows that support for SMEs resulted in the highest benefit/cost ratios at 5:1, 25 times more effective than transfers to persons. ACOA has continued to strengthen initiatives which make SMEs more competitive.

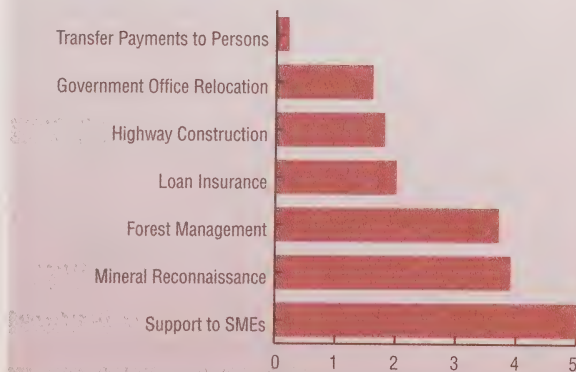
Support for resource development and infrastructure is only provided if the Agency is provided with additional funds for that purpose. An earlier type of support, the Loan Insurance Program, was discontinued. Although it produced positive benefits (a benefit/cost ratio of 2:1) it was less cost effective when compared with direct support to SME's.

Federal-provincial COOPERATION agreements have been consolidated into single, broadly-based agreements in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. The same approach is being adopted in Newfoundland as existing agreements run out. Each agreement targets

Benefit-cost is measured as the dollar increase in Atlantic GDP for every dollar of public and private spending on the initiative.

Source: Analysis by ACOA based on The Evaluations of the ACOA COOPERATION Program (Coopers and Lybrand, February 1994); and Statistics Canada, Survey of Small and Medium-Size Businesses, 1995 and 1997.

Benefit-Cost Ratios, Selected Measures of Support



² Calculated by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council.

a number of development areas that correspond to ACOA's strategic priorities, and emphasizes rural and community development. Single agreements replace over 50 older agreements addressing a wide range of development areas, bringing reductions in operating costs.³

Program Review in the Department of National Defence resulted in a number of Canadian Forces Bases being closed in Atlantic Canada. ACOA was given the responsibility of working with affected communities to help them rebuild local economic foundations.

1995 – The Federal Budget: ACOA as the “Single Point of Contact”

The 1995 federal budget identified ACOA as the “single point of contact” in Atlantic Canada for all federal programming for small businesses. As the managing partner, ACOA became responsible for establishing and managing the four Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs) located in the Atlantic Provinces. This new role gave the Agency an opportunity to act more effectively as the federal representative in the region. A good example of this was extending access to the Canada Business Service Centres' (CBSCs) information base to communities outside the current CBSC locations. Through partnerships with Community Economic Development Organizations, the CBSC network is being made available, via Internet technology, to a total of 105 existing Atlantic-based intermediaries. Using toll-free, fax, and Internet communications, CBSCs allow SMEs access to information on services available from twenty-eight federal departments as well as provincial and municipal governments and private-sector organizations. CBSCs have become key links for ACOA's economic development partners.

The federal government has increasingly made use of ACOA's expertise and relationships in the region to deliver programs. These have included the community economic development component of the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS), the Canada Infrastructure Works Program in the region and the Community Futures Program.

1996 – ACOA Becomes a Member of the Industry Portfolio

Since early 1996, ACOA has been a member of the Industry Portfolio of 13 departments and agencies that report to Parliament through the Minister of Industry. This change has brought greater coordination among and between regional development agencies and other departments and agencies in the Portfolio and strengthened ACOA's capacity to

³ ACOA, Performance Report for the period ending March 31, 1996.

effectively advocate the region's needs. The Portfolio's mandate reflects federal priorities—SME development, trade and foreign investment, technology and innovation and youth employment — which again correspond well with ACOA's priorities.

1997-98 – Renewed Emphasis on Rural Development

The federal government has acknowledged that community development is a bottom-up process and that rural Canadians are best placed to come up with their own development strategies. To give effect to the priority on rural renewal, the federal government in 1997 approved the concept of the cross-government Canadian Rural Partnership Initiative. This initiative is led by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

ACOA has taken the lead role for the initiative in Atlantic Canada, coordinating a team of federal departments to help rural communities take full advantage of economic development opportunities. It is a natural role for ACOA in a region where 49% of people live in rural areas, compared to 23% nationally⁴. As part of its support for community-based economic development, the Agency has undertaken measures to address the special challenges facing rural Canadians in developing their economies.

When ACOA was created in 1987, one rationale was that a smaller, regionally focussed agency would be better positioned to adapt and respond to the region's needs. Federal fiscal restraint and changing economic conditions have been challenges for the Agency. But they have also been opportunities for ACOA to revisit and strengthen its overall approach in order to achieve its mandate more effectively.

"The government will redouble its efforts to ensure that rural communities and all regions of Canada share in the economic benefits of the global knowledge-based economy."

*Speech from the Throne,
opening of 36th
Parliament, 1997*

⁴As defined by Statistics Canada in Population and Dwelling Counts, Cat. No. 93-305.

Chapter 2

How ACOA Pursues Its Mandate

To fulfill its mandate, ACOA pursues two distinct activities:

1. Ensuring that a wide variety of business development tools and resources serve the diverse needs of the region's emerging and existing entrepreneurs.
2. Ensuring that all economic development programs and activities in Atlantic Canada are coordinated and designed to improve the climate for business growth generally.

Partnerships

Mission

To work in partnership with the people of Atlantic Canada toward the long-term economic development of the region.

To meet its mandate of increasing opportunity for economic development in Atlantic Canada, ACOA's mission statement embraces the principle of partnership.

The Agency has put into place an extensive network, plus the structures necessary to carry out its mandate. At the federal level, the Agency has made partnership arrangements with other Industry Portfolio members such as the National Research Council, the Canadian Space Agency and the Business Development Bank of Canada to ensure that activities in support of SMEs complement and reinforce one another.

In the private sector, ACOA engages directly with corporate executives of firms, industry associations, as well as with business and community organizations, research institutions and the academic community. The ACOA Minister, Secretary of State and Agency staff deal directly on a day-to-day basis with political leaders and senior officials of provincial and local governments. ACOA regional Vice-Presidents chair or play key coordinating roles in federal councils in each province. These councils bring together federal department heads in the region for information exchange and policy/program coordination.

An example of a special form of partnership is ACOA's activities to support the economic development of the official language minorities in Atlantic Canada. As part of its commitment to implementing Section 41 of Part VII of the Official Languages Act, ACOA works with key economic players and plays a front-line role in economic development activities in communities in order to contribute to the federal government's commitment to the protection and promotion of official language minorities wherever they live. The Commissioner of Official Languages acknowledged the Agency's work by naming it on the 1996 Merit List for the development of minority-language communities.

Atlantic Canada's four provincial governments and widely-dispersed population create the need for increased coordination of efforts on a regional basis. ACOA is unique in Atlantic Canada in its ability to access and bring together leaders throughout the region to focus on a common, shared economic agenda for the region. The Agency has actively pursued strong, harmonized partnerships as the basis of regional economic development. An important example is:

- The Federal-Provincial Harmonization Committee. Chaired by the President of ACOA, this Committee is made up of provincial deputy ministers of Economic Development and Intergovernmental Affairs. It shares information and coordinates federal and provincial economic programs and activities throughout the region. Highlights of achievements to date include initiatives such as the International Business Development Agreement and the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership.

Economic Policy Research

Consistent with its legislated mandate to represent the interests of Atlantic Canada in federal policy formulation, and to help coordinate federal regional development efforts, ACOA has maintained a core capacity for economic research in support of program development, policy analysis and advice regarding key trends affecting the region's economy. During the five-year period covered by this report, the Agency's policy research effort matured significantly by developing a more strategic focus, engaging external partners in the policy process, and adopting a pro-active approach to disseminating research results to key stakeholders and the general public.

Today, ACOA's policy and research agenda comprises internally-driven research activities as well as research carried out by and with external partners. The research covers a range of economic and socio-economic topics. A research plan is maintained which reflects and supports key federal policies, and also ACOA and Industry Portfolio priorities and program initiatives. Moreover, it reflects emerging regional, provincial and local economic issues, structural challenges and opportunities in the Atlantic economy and sector-specific considerations. The approach optimizes regional stakeholder interest and engagement through an expanding network of regional partners including public policy organizations, universities, the economics community, business associations, and firms.

"The output of the competitiveness programme is the most extensive benchmarking exercise ever performed on a Canadian region."

*Jim McNiven,
School of Management,
Dalhousie University*

The core theme of the economic policy research agenda has been the competitiveness of the Atlantic Canadian economy, beginning with an extensive effort to benchmark the region's competitiveness based on international standards and current economic thinking. Initiated in 1995, study reports were completed and released in 1996 and 1997. Officials from the OECD and the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland suggest this is the first attempt by any region to use international models to benchmark its economic competitiveness in an international framework.

Strategic Priorities

Figure 1 demonstrates how ACOA's strategic priorities represent areas that are critical to Atlantic Canada's economic development. They reflect the needs of Atlantic entrepreneurs, address key economic trends, and support the priorities of the Industry Portfolio.

Service Lines

ACOA's service lines are the links between strategic priorities and clients. They are the day-to-day programs through which ACOA does its job. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between mandate, strategic priorities, and service lines grouped in terms of core and non-core activities.

Figure 1 - The Global Economy and ACOA's Priorities



Figure 2 - ACOA's Mandate, Priorities and Service Lines



Resources

ACOA is a small Agency with full-time equivalent employment of 371 persons in fiscal year 1997-98. The Agency's *Core Programming* (primarily the Business Development Program, the COOPERATION Program and Community-Based Economic Development) comprise over 2/3 of the Agency's program spending. The balance of the Agency's program spending is on *Non-Core Programming*. Most of the non-core activities are programs that the Agency delivers on behalf of other federal departments. These programs are usually designed to address specific problem areas of the national and/or regional economies. Examples of such programming are: The Community Economic Development and Economic Renewal components of The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy, Base Closures, Canada Infrastructure Works Program and the Fixed Link Redevelopment Initiative.

As indicated in Figure 3 in the five-year period 1993-94 to 1997-98, use of ACOA resources on core programs (total core programming plus transfers to OGD's for COOPERATION and transfers to OGD's Others) equalled \$1,603.9 million for an annual average of \$321 million. By comparison in the first five-year period (1988-89 to 1992-93), ACOA spending on core programs averaged \$357 million.

Spending on non-core programming by ACOA totalled \$358 million for an annual average of \$72 million during the 1993-94 to 1997-98 period as compared to an annual average of \$12 million in the 1988-89 to 1992-93 period.

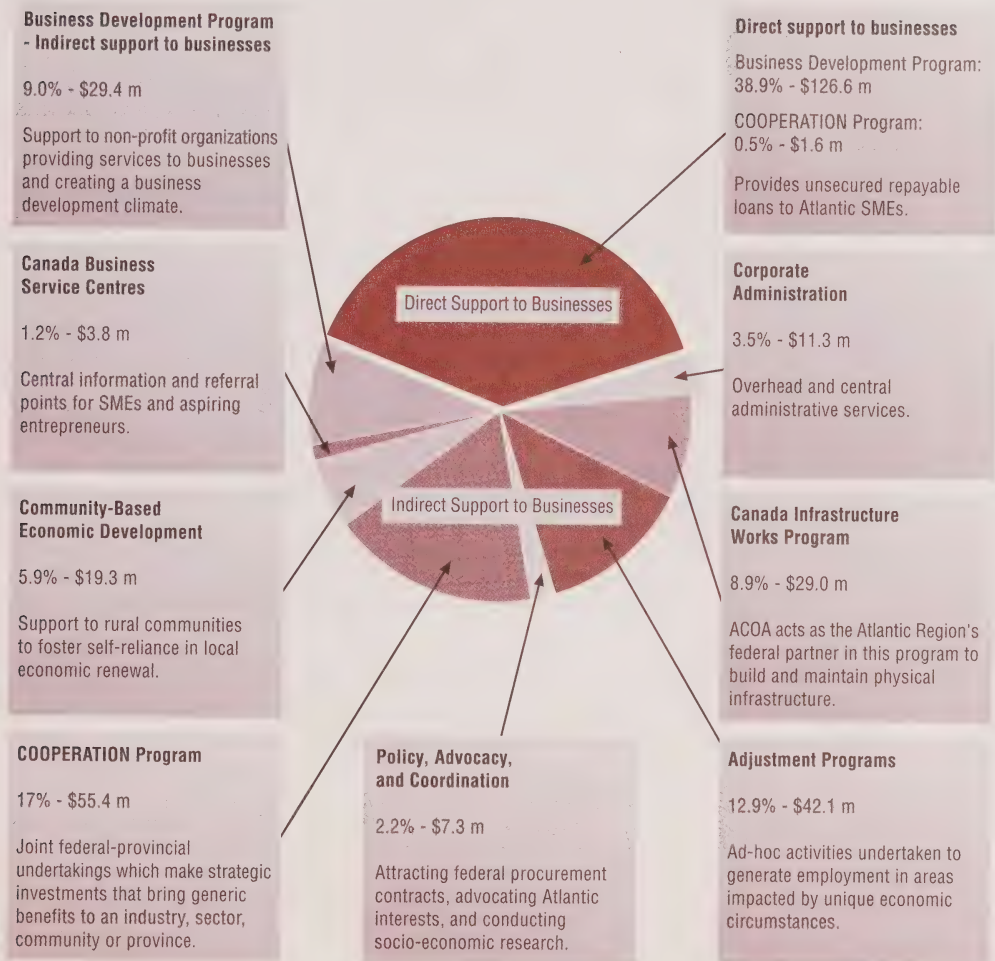
Figure 3 - ACOA's Regional Development Resource Utilization
1993-94 to 1997-98 (\$ MILLIONS)

Business / Service Line	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	Total
Development						
Core Programming						
Business Development	138.5	135.8	146.7	126.8	156.0	703.8
Canada Business Service Centres	1.3	2.1	3.3	3.8	3.8	14.3
Community-Based Economic Development			9.1	17.5	19.3	45.9
COOPERATION Program	91.5	100.2	89.3	78.5	57.0	416.5
Policy, Advocacy and Coordination	5.8	6.2	6.7	6.7	7.3	32.7
Total Core Programming	237.1	244.3	255.1	233.3	243.4	1,213.2
Non-Core Programming						
Adjustment Programs						
Fisheries Alternatives	24.0	25.2	8.6	1.6	0.7	60.1
TAGS-Community Economic Development			0.9	4.3	9.9	15.1
TAGS-Economic Renewal			1.0	9.2	20.9	31.1
Base Closures/Slemon Park Corporation	2.5	5.6	17.3	8.8	7.8	42.0
Fixed Link Redevelopment Initiative			0.7	4.3	2.8	7.8
Bishop Falls	0.7	1.1	2.5	1.3		5.6
Total Adjustment Programs	27.2	31.9	31.0	29.5	42.1	161.7
Infrastructure						
Canada Infrastructure Works Program		59.0	70.6	38.0	29.0	196.6
Total Non-Core Programming	27.2	90.9	101.6	67.5	71.1	358.3
Total Development	264.3	335.2	356.7	300.8	314.5	1,571.5
Corporate Administration	11.4	12.0	11.6	11.0	11.3	57.3
TOTAL AGENCY SPENDING	275.7	347.2	368.3	311.8	325.8	1,628.8
Transfers to OGD's for COOPERATION	110.9	80.7	71.2	33.8	17.1	313.7
Transfers to OGD's Others (1)	36.2	7.9	9.3	10.3	13.3	77.0
TOTAL ACOA FUNDS USED	422.8	435.8	448.8	355.9	356.2	2,019.5

(1) Transfers to other government departments (OGDs) reflect ACOA's coordination role. Funds were transferred to top-up Other Government Department programs where this was deemed the best means of achieving regional development objectives.

Figure 4 - ACOA 1997-98 Expenditures

Total Agency Expenditures: \$325.8 m



Section II: ACOA at Work

This section recounts ACOA's progress and achievements in the economic development of Atlantic Canada and in implementing the federal government's strategic priorities as listed in Section I. ACOA has learned to work in partnership with all other stakeholders in local and regional economic development. The examples in this section illustrate this partnership in action and the increased responsibility taken by partners in economic development. In this overall approach, ACOA can be the lead coordinator, can have a prime responsibility for implementing a program or project, can share these roles with other partners, or can simply be one of several players.

The chapters in this Section II are:

- Innovation, Technology and Skills Development;
- Small Business Development;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Tourism;
- Trade;
- Community-Based Economic Development;
- ACOA as federal delivery agent; and
- Policy Research and Analysis Initiatives.

Although examples may fall under one of these headings, this does not mean a project or program's impact is limited to that priority or theme. One characteristic of ACOA's work is its multi-dimensional impact. Assisting a business in a community not only means support for the business, but also for the community where it resides. Helping people gain access to, and understand the use of, modern technologies not only helps individuals and families, but is also an investment in industries and communities.

Chapter 3

Innovation, Technology and Skills Development

The Atlantic economy traditionally has depended on resource extraction and processing. Industries such as forest products, food processing, and minerals remain important, but have been growing slowly or even declining in relative terms. These trends are expected to continue. At the same time, “knowledge-based” industries, such as information technology (IT) and biotechnology, have been growing rapidly world-wide. These industries must become integral parts of the Atlantic economy as growth sectors in their own right to enable the region’s SME sector to remain competitive and expand.

Building knowledge-based industries in Atlantic Canada begins from a strong foundation. There is a good infrastructure in universities and various research facilities, although linking this capacity to industrial and market needs could be improved. The region’s educational system produces proportionally more engineering and science graduates than other parts of Canada.⁵ Fostering industries and companies will provide opportunities to those who would otherwise have to leave the region to seek jobs.

Offsetting these advantages, Atlantic Canada has a shortage of experienced managerial, professional and technical workers. Making up this shortage means the region must bring in the necessary expertise from outside, or must train and then retain more Atlantic residents. There is also a lack of strong industrial clusters. Strengthening existing clusters, and creating new ones, means building alliances between firms, governments, universities, and other institutions.

ACOA’s support for innovation and technology centres on helping SMEs increase their productivity and technological diversity. This involves developing and commercializing new products and processes; developing, acquiring, and retaining skilled workers; diffusing technology; and fostering the growth of clusters. ACOA and its partners do this in several ways, including:

1. helping companies innovate;
2. helping workers develop technical skills;
3. helping people understand and use technology and science; and
4. helping build alliances and partnerships for technology development.

Our education system has to help our citizens learn the judgment and skills required to manage the overwhelming amount of information that is available to them ... The new definition of literacy in our society should include the ability to use computers to access and create the knowledge base of the 21st century.

*Honourable
John Manley,
Minister of Industry*

⁵ Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 81-229-XPB.

1) Helping Companies Innovate

There are few better examples of the benefits from government risk-sharing with the private sector than innovation, where the risks are high but where success can lead to significant economic benefits. Statistics Canada data demonstrate the contribution that ACOA can make to business innovation activity. Between 1993 and 1995, average R&D expenditures in firms receiving ACOA innovation support rose by 14% compared to a decline of 30% in all firms reporting R&D.⁶

In 1997, an ACOA review of innovation projects estimated that just over half of projects assisted had success or potential for success. However, the benefits exceeded the risks as successful projects generated additions to regional income equal to 4.5 times the costs of all projects both successful and unsuccessful⁷.

Example 1: Essential Lessons from the Innovation Process

The lengthy process of bringing a new technology-based process successfully to market, and the pitfalls along the way, demonstrate two required qualities – patience and diverse partners.

When creating a new commercial product, there are uncertainties, up to and including commercial failure, along the way. Innovation in particular faces high risks and long pay-off periods.

Government support for this process often involves not only financial assistance, but also a high degree of “hand-holding” including seeking technical advice, encouragement, and “reality checks”. This can entail more commitment of time than is usual for other types of business support, and an enhanced technical capability on the part of the staff person assigned to a project.

An example of the process comes from Moncton. In the mid-1980s, an optometrist/entrepreneur approached a federally-supported (now ACOA-supported) research institute at the Université de Moncton with an idea for an electronic process to manufacture eyeglass frames. A reading device would measure the contours of the frames and electronically transmit these measurements to a cutting machine. The reading device and cutter could be in the same room or in different cities; distance between them did not matter.

The project eventually led to one of the world's most advanced optical equipment manufacturing labs in Moncton, employing 40 highly-skilled people with the prospect of 110 more jobs within 12 months. But the initial project failed in the late 1980s. The research and ideas were strong, but the product was launched too quickly, there were

⁶ Statistics Canada, Employment Dynamics.

⁷ ACOA, Innovation Element Review, Overview of Results, April 1997.

production problems, the market wasn't ready for the product, and eventual users were not equipped to work with the new technology. Government's willingness to stay with the project, to preserve some of the hard work that had already gone into it, helped it to its current success.

The software related to the original project was sold to a local entrepreneur, who secured new investors (not governments) and began more marketing. Most importantly, the process became more sophisticated when one of the project engineers sought ACOA help to develop the technology to cut the surface and contour of eyeglass lenses, rather than just frames. New private investors were sought (\$11.5 million for R&D, marketing and working capital). Contracts worth \$67 million are currently being negotiated, and sales of about \$150 million are expected in the second year of operation. Some of the original researchers are still with the company. A technology company of this type is likely to foster more entrepreneurs.

Two lessons from this story are:

- patience – it took 10 years for significant benefits from the project to become reality, including a business failure along the way; and
- diversity of effort – finding investors, and effective marketing must accompany new technological developments.

Example 2: Knowledge-based industries in Nova Scotia

The information technology sector in Nova Scotia has been growing rapidly. Some 300 companies make up the IT sector in this province today. A study recently completed by the University College of Cape Breton (UCCB) indicates a broad range of skills in the region, including systems analysts and programmers.⁸ This is a competitive advantage in a sector that is crying out for qualified workers throughout North America.

Alliances and partnerships have evolved, supported by ACOA and the Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC). For example:

- The Technology Advisory Group is essentially a “network” that allows IT professionals to stay in touch with each other;

Knowledge-based industries begin to develop in Nova Scotia, involving new technology skills and helping community economies diversify.

⁸ Accessible Technologies, Cape Breton Information Technology Human Resource Inventory.

- UCCB provides technical services to business and industry, supported by a Memorandum of Understanding with ECBC;
- The Information Technology Association of Nova Scotia has 160 member companies, and was set up with funding from the Canada-Nova Scotia COOPERATION Agreement on Economic Diversification; and
- The Telecom Applications Research Alliance (TARA) received support to set up from the Canada-Nova Scotia COOPERATION Agreement on Technology Development in 1994. TARA is mainly privately funded with only 27% of its initial five-year funding provided by government. Although still predominantly Nova Scotia-based, TARA has begun attracting members from other provinces (Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario) who are drawn by its capacity to support the development of telecom-based services and products.

"When I was working with IBM Canada in Toronto, and considering starting my own company, assistance from ACOA was the deciding factor, not only to take the first step but also to move back to Cape Breton to do so. In addition, ongoing support from ACOA programs have been instrumental in the continued growth and success of our company."

*Mathew Georgiou,
President,
MediaSpark
IT Solutions Inc.*

Recent technology-based developments in Cape Breton are evidence of a welcome economic diversification in the island's economy, long associated with mature industries like coal and steel. New, knowledge-based industries have now developed there, especially in the burgeoning field of multimedia products. This is not only based on the skills of local entrepreneurs, but also on their passionate desire to live and work in Cape Breton rather than anywhere else.

Two companies that typify the new developments in Cape Breton are MediaSpark IT Solutions Inc. and Fitzgerald Studios. MediaSpark was founded by Mathew Gheorgiou, who initially left Cape Breton to work for IBM Canada in Toronto. In 1994 he was lured back by the prospect of being his own boss and by the fact that he wanted to live in Cape Breton. With assistance from ECBC and ACOA he set up MediaSpark, a company that provides custom programming, graphic services, web sites, and other software products for clients in Cape Breton, mainland Nova Scotia, other parts of Canada, and customers in 100 countries around the world. MediaSpark now employs seven people in Sydney.

Fitzgerald Studios was founded by professional photographer Owen Fitzgerald. The company has made its name by producing CD-ROMs, notably one that tells the story of the Fortress of Louisbourg, and another about the life and work of Alexander Graham Bell. The most recent product tells the story of the Acadians. ACOA supported the production of the Louisbourg CD-ROM. Multimedia now accounts for 90% of Fitzgerald Studios' output.

Both MediaSpark and Fitzgerald Studies received recognition as two of the top “25 UP & COMERS” in Canada under the “Tech Watch BRANHAM 200 SOFTWARE COMPANIES” list.

Working in multimedia involves different skills, including artists (photographers, videographers, musicians), technicians, writers and editors, and business people. Neither MediaSpark nor Fitzgerald Studio are big enough to have all these skills in-house. But they can have access to most of them through a network called MEDIA fusion that brings together professionals in Cape Breton and (increasingly) mainland Nova Scotia. MEDIA fusion was supported by ACOA and the Province of Nova Scotia under the COOPERATION Program. In Sydney, a new initiative is also taking shape, whereby the old Courthouse building will be turned into the Silicon Island Innovation Centre, and will house a number of multimedia companies, all working in the closest proximity to each other. Both federal and provincial governments are supporting the conversion of the building, which it is hoped will be completed for occupation by the end of 1998. The Centre signed up 22 tenants before work on the conversion actually began. When it opens, it will already be full, and there is a waiting list to get in.

Example 3: The Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation (CCFI)

In 1989, Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) approached ACOA for assistance to develop a centre for applied research and development in the fishing industry. This was at a time when cod stocks were declining steadily, and there was doubt about what such a centre could do to help. CCFI, now in its second contract with ACOA, has completed more than 330 projects in nine years. There have been 178 projects since 1993 in the centre’s three core areas - aquaculture, processing, and harvesting.

The focus on R&D has steadily picked up. From researching Atlantic halibut and sea urchins to improving vessel safety and comfort, CCFI is integral to the fishing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador today. CCFI can offer technological support to fishing companies in a number of ways. One example is given in a recent evaluation of CCFI.⁹ The development of an anti-roll tank has enabled a 20% increase in fishing effort expected to result in increased landings of \$4 to 6 million per year. CCFI is housed in the Marine Institute at Memorial University, Newfoundland’s principal research centre. It brings together researchers from fishing technology, biology, and business administration. It also has access to other MUN research skills like those in the Centre for Cold Ocean Resource Engineering and the Ocean Sciences Centre.

A far-sighted proposal in 1989 helps a traditional resource-based industry to modernize.

“The research [on how to reduce roll on board the company’s vessels] allowed us to make improvements that resulted in a better quality product. We are able to have a longer fishing season, and stay out for more days.”

*Rex Simmonds,
President,
AMP Fisheries and
Simmonds Seafoods*

⁹ Baird Planning Associates and Andrews Port Services Ltd., Evaluation of the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation, June 1998.

The evaluation reports that over the past four years, CCFI has contributed \$4.5 million to R&D projects leveraging almost four dollars for every dollar invested, for a total investment of \$21.7 million.

The evaluation concludes that "CCFI has contributed enormously to the diversification, growth, improved viability and competitiveness of the fishing and aquaculture industry.... the existing and potential pay-off from CCFI's activities is enormous, easily justifying its modest budget".

As a community struggles to renew its economic base after a military base closes, ACOA helps build new industries.

The aviation industry is experiencing radical growth and consequently the industry was literally crying out for trained people. All sectors of the Island aerospace industry have identified lack of training and continuing education as major barriers to the future development of the industry.

Alex MacAulay,
President,
Holland College.

2) Helping workers develop technical skills

Example 1: Aviation Maintenance Institute

There was no aerospace industry in Prince Edward Island in 1991. In 1998, it is the fourth largest industry (by revenues) in the province. All of this has happened at the former CFB Summerside, that with ACOA involvement has become Slemmon Park, housing a variety of aerospace-related companies. (The story of ACOA's involvement in converting CFB Summerside to Slemmon Park is told later in Chapter Nine.)

Such rapid expansion cannot take place without a pool of skilled workers. In PEI, this pool was built virtually from scratch, with ACOA's help. The Agency helped establish the Aviation Maintenance Institute at Holland College in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada. Graduates from the Institute would become available for aerospace companies locating at Slemmon Park, like Weibel, Testori Americas, and Atlantic Turbines Ltd.

Some 60 companies across Canada were surveyed to determine course content, leading to the compilation of a list of 200 required skills. Students work on five different aero engines. The speed with which the Institute was put in place meant that the first graduates from the program completed training in mid-1994, while the Institute itself was not officially opened until early 1995. All of these first graduates are still employed in aerospace, ten of them at Slemmon Park.

Slemmon Park's aerospace-related tenants now employ a total of some 250 technicians (150 at anchor tenant Atlantic Turbines Ltd. alone), 85% of whom are Islanders. The average wage of these workers is about 12% higher than the provincial average. Island-based aerospace industries in 1996 had revenues of \$76 million, or \$10 million more than the value of lobster landings in that year. All of the output from the sector is sold in markets outside PEI, and the vast majority of this (an estimated 95%) outside Canada. Although human resource development is not a traditional role for ACOA, its rapid response to a stated need for trained personnel to regain jobs lost through closure of CFB Summerside was critical to the growth of aerospace at Slemmon Park.

Example 2: Woodworking Training and Value-Added Development Centre

High tech is not only about aerospace, or information technology. It is also about adapting new processes in traditional industries like forest products, which have been a staple in the New Brunswick economy for centuries. A survey of 230 woodworking firms (mainly producers of items such as furniture, cabinets, doors, windows, toys, and so on) indicated a very strong need for support in advancing and applying new technologies in the workplace, and for training programs to teach workers how to use these technologies.

ACOA supports traditional industries looking to adopt new technologies, then helps train people and companies on how to use them.

In response to this need, ACOA teamed with the New Brunswick Department of Advanced Education and Labour to establish the Woodworking Training and Value-Added Development Centre at the Campbellton campus of the New Brunswick Community College in 1995. The Centre's primary purpose is to provide industry with technology-adept graduates who will help to both maintain and enhance its competitiveness, and also assist in the development of new products. The Centre teaches state-of-the-art software, such as Vision 2020, the Pattern System, AutoCAD, CAD/CAM, and MasterCAM.

Having trained individuals who can make maximum use of the equipment makes us a great deal more competitive. With that kind of capability we can bid on any kind of job.

Kerry Ross, General Manager, Skyway Wood Products, Miramichi

They definitely saved us time and money. It's a real benefit to local industry to have a facility with the equipment and the know-how.

Marc Cormier, Forest Ice Inc., Bathurst

The Centre also works with companies to develop or adopt new technologies for their operations. Forest Ice Inc of Bathurst, for example, sought the help of the Centre to develop a more efficient way to manufacture broom-ball stick handles. Skyway Wood Products in Miramichi sought advice from the Centre to determine the type of equipment it needed for a new plywood laminating process, and how this should be laid out. Other companies (including Flakeboard, Groupe Savoie, and J.D. Irving Ltd.) are supporting the Centre by providing material and equipment for training purposes.

3) Helping People Understand and Use Technology and Science

Improving community access to technology means people learn how to use it and understand it. The ways the provinces have done this demonstrate both similarities and

STEM~Net has evolved to serve both teachers and students in all parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the student focus has become an increasingly important and rewarding part of STEM~Net's progress.

Nancy Parsons-Heath, A/Director, STEM~Net

[STEM~Net] allows for direct communication with other teachers in a cost-free manner, and it brings resources and learning aids for teachers together in one place.

*Leo Etchegary,
High School mathematics
teacher, Mount Pearl*

We have been very impressed with STANet's innovative programs, especially the use of the latest computer technologies to get science messages out to schools, teachers, government and the general public. Our common goal, to increase science literacy, has been greatly enhanced as a result of our partnership with STANet.

*Clair Ripley,
Coordinator, Atomic
Energy of Canada Ltd*

differences. Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, for example, have built specialized communications networks. Prince Edward Island has a broadly-based development initiative involving governments and the private sector as partners. New Brunswick has helped schools buy computer equipment and establish access to the Internet. ACOA has been involved in all these projects for some time, recognizing the importance of enhancing people's understanding of what technology means for them.

STEM~Net (Science, Technology Education, Mathematics Network) in Newfoundland, and STANet (Science and Technology Awareness Network) in Nova Scotia are broadly similar. STEM~Net is school-based, aimed primarily at teachers but increasingly also at students. STANet is primarily aimed at adults. STEM~Net was established in 1993 with financial support from the Canada-Newfoundland COOPERATION Agreement on Human Resource Development, and represented Canada's first province-wide Internet server. It has the dual purpose of being an on-line resource for school and college teachers. Based at Memorial University of Newfoundland, students can use STEM~Net to take part in different projects. A partnership with Cable Atlantic brings the Internet to more than 175 schools in Newfoundland. A recent phone survey of 440 teachers indicated 90% of them use the Internet monthly, and an equal proportion said their use of IT has increased for teaching purposes. STEM~Net has influenced the development of Industry Canada's SchoolNet. The SchoolNet News Network, for example, is a national student project developed and managed by STEM~Net.

STANet was developed in 1995 to address the issue of science literacy. It links organizations with an interest in promoting science and technology, and provides information on IT activities. Its primary goal is to foster a science and technology culture in Nova Scotia. There is a long-term aim of developing a Science Council for Nova Scotia. ACOA has supported STANet from its inception, through the Canada-Nova Scotia COOPERATION Agreement on Economic Diversification. STANet won the prestigious Michael Smith award for Science Promotion in 1997, and has been recognized by the Conference Board of Canada's Excellence in Business-Education Partnerships.

Prince Edward Island's Knowledge Economy Partnership (KEP) is an alliance of federal and provincial governments, the University of Prince Edward Island, Holland College, and the private sector. It began in early 1997 as a provincial initiative, aiming to identify the potential that the knowledge economy holds for Islanders. The federal government recognized its

importance in shaping the business environment of Canada's smallest province, and rapidly offered its support. KEP intends to establish the first province-wide broad-band network in Canada as a new way to build business capacity. ACOA co-chairs KEP.

KEP concentrates on three keys to success in the knowledge economy:

- Better, faster, more effective client service;
- Better IT skills for Islanders; and
- Job creation in knowledge-based industries.

KEP includes a funding program to spur private-sector development of knowledge-based enterprises—some 28 proposals were received in the first wave, and 21 were approved, with support of almost \$1 million. Some of the objectives of KEP are:

- to strengthen relationships between governments and citizens;
- to allow rural communities better access to information and services;
- to provide better, faster public service, eliminate duplication in service provision, and enable costs savings; and
- to create jobs in knowledge-based enterprises.

Partners committed \$1 million to KEP in its first year of operation (1997/98). ACOA provided 80%, with the provincial government and the Department of Veterans' Affairs each contributing 10%.

The Cutting Edge Technology for New Brunswick Schools program was supported by the Canada-New Brunswick COOPERATION Agreement on Entrepreneurship and Human Resource Development. Between 1992 and 1996 it has helped schools obtain computer equipment and helped them get access to the Internet. By doing this, new federal and provincial initiatives (SchoolNet, Community Access Centres) have had a better chance of working in New Brunswick. Both English and French School Boards were able to develop business-education partnerships and community-school partnerships because of the equipment acquisition program.

Helping people understand and use technology means several things. It recognizes that Canada is in the middle of an economic transformation in which information and its transmission is becoming paramount. The key resource in turning this to our advantage is people and their skills. To the extent that ACOA can help Atlantic Canadians become more familiar with technology, it prepares the region for a better future.

This important partnership is already making Prince Edward Island a leader in the education, information and high technology fields. And that's precisely what it is designed to do.

*Honourable Pat Binns,
Premier of Prince
Edward Island.*

4) Helping Build Alliances and Partnerships for Technology Development

ACOA helps clinical researchers in the four provinces combine their efforts to attract contracts to test new pharmaceutical preparations in Atlantic Canada.

Association officials attributed much of the investment increase to the work of Clinical Trials... "They have done a superb job in demonstrating the expertise and the infrastructure required is not only available but competitive."

Greg Hines, chairman of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada - (Chronicle Herald, May 29, 1998)

The best example of this role involves the Clinical Trials Atlantic Corporation (CTAC). This is a partnership of universities in all four provinces, and teaching hospitals in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. CTAC aims to develop a knowledge-based cluster in the region centred on medical devices and services. It will do this by establishing a network of skilled investigators and research coordinators, and by increasing clinical research spending capacity by means of better marketing to the pharmaceutical industry.

Bill C-91 in 1993 extended the period of patent protection for new drugs in Canada, to enable proprietary pharmaceutical companies recover the large costs of developing and testing new drugs. In return, the companies agreed to increase their levels of research spending in Canada. In 1994, 1.6% of this spending was in Atlantic Canada. An ACOA-commissioned study identified that industry cooperation was needed to maximize research investment in Atlantic Canada.

CTAC came together as a result of ACOA's efforts, in partnership with the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada and the Medical Research Council. CTAC became self-supporting in 1998 through funding from its members and revenues from other sources. The Clinical Trials Atlantic Corporation reported that:

- it played a key role in increasing the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada spending from \$8.4 million in 1995 to \$16.0 million in 1997 ¹⁰;
- Atlantic Canada's share of total Canadian R&D spending has risen from 1.1% in 1991 to 2.4% in 1997;
- it established a regional network of more than 500 researchers and 200 experienced coordinators;
- increasing pharmaceutical industry investment and spending in Atlantic Canada has increased the region's capabilities in technology transfer and clinical testing.

¹⁰ Source: Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada, 1995, 1996, and 1997 Annual Reports.

Chapter 4

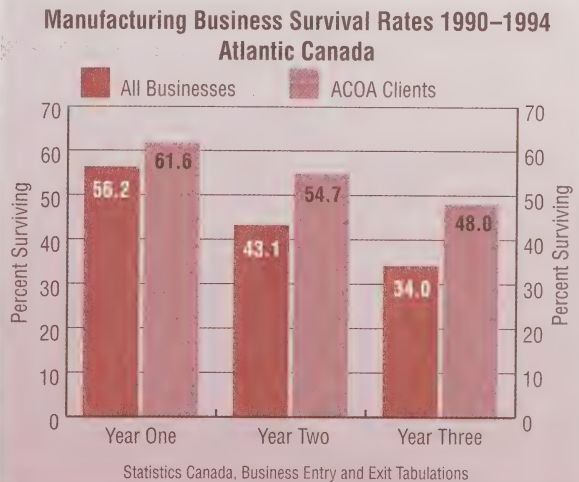
Small Business Development

While SMEs account for the larger share of total business in Atlantic Canada, 95% of all businesses created between 1989 and 1995 had fewer than 100 employees. About 90% had fewer than 20 employees. SMEs, both new and existing, were responsible for over half (58%) of the new jobs in the region. The emphasis on small business development is entirely consistent with ACOA's legislation, which regards SMEs as a means to increase economic opportunity, enhance earned income, and create jobs.

It is a fact, however, that two-thirds of SMEs fail in the first three years of operation. This means they find it difficult to attract the necessary financial support to start up or to expand their operations. Studies have confirmed that Atlantic SMEs face their biggest hurdles in obtaining the necessary capital to successfully start and grow a business. For example, a recent survey of potential entrepreneurs identified "inadequate financing" as the single most important reason why their business idea did not materialize.¹¹ Again in a recent survey of ACOA clients, 62% of companies identified access to capital as the most important support needed to achieve growth.¹² A survey by the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses reached similar conclusions showing that small firms in Atlantic Canada "have more trouble than anywhere else in the country in securing credit."¹³ Overcoming these hurdles remains one of ACOA's priorities.

Support to business does make a difference. New businesses supported by ACOA have had a better chance of survival in the first three years of operation when compared with all Atlantic firms.¹⁴ In manufacturing (where there has been a higher incidence of ACOA clients) one out of two new supported firms were still operating in 1994 compared to only one out of three for all Atlantic manufacturers. Supported firms in other sectors, like tourism and business services, also stand a better chance of surviving. Statistics Canada surveys of ACOA clients conducted for the Agency in 1995 and

1997 provide further corroboration of the impact of ACOA support. In a 1997 survey, only 3.8% of clients reported that the support had no impact on their business. Almost 55% reported that the business met its objective due in large part to the ACOA support.



¹¹ Atlantic Canada Benchmark Awareness Study, The Research Department Inc., May 1997.

¹² Statistics Canada Survey of Small- and Medium-sized businesses in Atlantic Canada, 1997.

¹³ Stéphane Robichaud, commenting on the Canadian Federation of Independent Business' survey Credit Where Credit is Due, as reported in the Daily Gleaner, January 28, 1998.

¹⁴ Companies that cease operations include mergers, change of ownership, failures and those not reporting income or filing corporate tax returns.

Another 20% indicated that they met their objectives due in part to ACOA and 19% reported that while they didn't meet objectives, ACOA support ensured the survival of the firm.

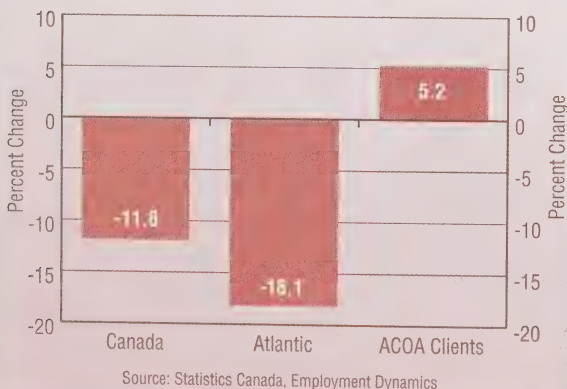
ACOA support can be both direct (working with an individual company) or indirect (working with groups or industry associations). Indirect support to firms—to innovate, to develop export markets, and to improve their management or workforce skills—is the more important, accounting for over 60% of ACOA expenditures (Figure 4, p. 15).

Access to Capital and Information

The Business Development Program (BDP) emerged from its predecessor, the Action Program, in 1995. It is the principal means for ACOA to provide direct financial assistance to businesses and non-profit groups supporting business-related activities. Both Action and BDP were designed to help SMEs start up, expand or modernize, and took the form of interest-free, unsecured loans in February, 1995.

ACOA also encourages conventional lenders to increase financing to SMEs, stimulating the creation of private and public sector investment funds to lever capital from other sources. Examples have been loans to PEI Capital Fund Inc. and to the New Brunswick Federation of Labour's Workers Investment Fund Inc., and ACOA's participation in the creation of a private-public venture capital company, ACF Equity Atlantic Inc.

Manufacturing Employment Change 1989–1995



The effects of ACOA's lending activities can be gauged from Statistics Canada data on employment trends. From 1989 to 1995 there was an overall decline in manufacturing employment in both Canada and Atlantic Canada. Over the same period, however, ACOA clients registered a 5.2% increase in employment.

Further evidence of ACOA's contribution to employment and business growth comes from the Statistics Canada surveys of Agency clients referred to above. Only 5% of clients stated their projects would have gone ahead without ACOA support. More than 20% would not have occurred

at all. The majority (62%) would have postponed or reduced their investments. Not only was there an average increase of eight jobs per company assisted, but clients also reported increased sales, including exports. The 1997 survey revealed that projects completed had generated sales increases of \$1.2 billion from 1996 to 1997, or an

average of \$437,000 per company assisted. About one-third of these extra sales were exports. Of those companies exporting, 68% indicated that ACOA had helped them significantly or somewhat.

In terms of improving access to information, ACOA supports a client-oriented business information network based on Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs), Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs), and Community-Based Economic Development organizations.

CBSCs are located in all four Atlantic provinces and provide business-related services and products to SMEs and aspiring entrepreneurs. In Atlantic Canada, they are run and coordinated by ACOA. The centres have on-site services, libraries and databases, but much of their information provision is accomplished by phone, by fax, and by Internet to all parts of the region.

CBSCs have a mission to improve SME start-ups, survival, and rates of growth by providing access to timely, accurate, and relevant information and referrals. Walk-in (or store-front) centres were established, each with a 1-800 number, in 1993 and 1994. They have since established networks that link them to CBDCs and other community development agencies, to provide more services to rural areas and small communities. In 1997, ACOA's Young Entrepreneurs ConneXion program added its own 1-800 lines targeted at people from 18 to 29 years old who are interested in starting or expanding a business in the region.

In 1997-98, the four provincial CBSCs dealt with 81,406 enquiries, or 24% more than in 1995-96. A recent survey of clients confirmed that the CBSCs are providing a level of service that is as high as, or higher than, service quality leaders in the private sector.¹⁵ Service Centre client tracking by Corporate Research Associates Inc. found that 83% of clients claim that their specific needs for information or assistance were met or exceeded. 87% of clients found the Service Centres to be very (56%) or somewhat (31%) helpful in allowing them to make better business decisions.

Business Management Practices (BMP)

Research shows that enhancing management skills and increasing the adoption of formal business management practices can lead to better SME survival, growth, and productivity.¹⁶ Unfortunately, studies¹⁷ have also shown that Atlantic Canada ranked poorly against benchmarks for management efficiency, which partly explains why the region's SME survival rate is lower than the national average. The objectives of the BMP initiative are to enhance the skills of business managers and owners, to increase their understanding of the benefits of BMP, and to stimulate increased use of BMP by SMEs in Atlantic Canada.

¹⁵ Corporate Research Associates Inc., Atlantic Canada Business Service Centres, Client Tracking Program, 1998.

¹⁶ OECD, Baldwin, Johnson, Johannis (See Bibliography).

¹⁷ North America Policy Group, Atlantic Canada and the World: A Development Comparison, 1996.

We moved from six to 60 employees in four years, and we are still hiring. We would have 25 less engineers and technicians today without ISO certification.

*Don Dalley, Vice-President, Engineering,
Sea Systems Ltd, St John's*

Impact of Quality Management on Sales and Revenues



Impact of Quality Management on Export Sales



ACOA's efforts at improving BMP in the region can be illustrated by three examples, that are ultimately related to each other.

Example 1: Quality Management

There is evidence that extensive use of quality management practices results in a positive impact on firm productivity and market share.¹⁸ In early 1994, ACOA introduced a program to support quality management projects undertaken by SMEs. A survey in 1997 assessed the impact of implementing a quality program and determined the importance of ACOA support.¹⁹ Interviews were completed with two-thirds of clients assisted. Most (84%) had implemented the ISO 9000 program.

Market factors were mentioned most frequently as the driving force influencing a client to implement a quality program. One-third of clients cited customer requirements and 27% cited the ability to compete in export markets as the most important factors. The most common barriers were the associated costs and time it took to put a program in place.

Respondents reported far-reaching benefits from their quality programs. Improvements in the internal work environment and work processes were the most common. Others were improved customer satisfaction, a maintained competitive position, and better profits. Almost three-quarters of clients attributed increased revenues to their quality program. Fully 70% stated the impact of the program was either high or moderate. A review of financial statements for 46 of 83 clients indicated increasing sales in three out of four cases.

Almost three out of five (59%) clients said their quality program had improved access to export markets. Three-quarters said the program had either a high or moderate impact on their export sales. Almost 60% of clients said their quality program had contributed to an increase in employment. About two-thirds of companies actually increased their employment levels.

The survey results indicated ACOA's support has been vital in enabling clients achieve benefits. A high proportion of clients said all (19%), most (30%), or some (34%) of the benefits they gained from implementing quality programs were due to ACOA support. Several companies have gone on to

¹⁸ Industry Canada, *Striving for Quality: Survey of Quality Management Practices in the Canadian Manufacturing Sector*, 1993.

¹⁹ ACOA, *Impact of ACOA Support for Quality Management*, March 1998.

implement further quality-enhancing activities of their own. ACOA support has spurred companies to develop quality as part of their corporate culture.

However, the survey revealed a general need to raise the level of commitment to quality and to raise awareness about the benefits of better management practices. The approach adopted in New Brunswick is instructive.

Example 2: New Brunswick Encourages Better Business Management Practices

Since 1996, improving business management practices in New Brunswick has been a priority for ACOA. Promotion and awareness of business management practices was crucial to obtaining the interest and commitment of SMEs.

ACOA modified its consultant advisory service program so that it could respond to situations when account managers identified management deficiencies in their clients' businesses. A self-administered diagnostics tool was developed to help do this. As well, an information kit was prepared on finance, service, and products which support quality initiatives.

Over 125 people participated in a conference on Business Management Practices hosted by ACOA and the New Brunswick Training Group Inc. in the Fall of 1996. Twelve skill-specific workshops on six major topics were offered by New Brunswick-based training companies. To make the sessions more accessible, they were offered again during the 1997/98 fiscal year at a number of locations around the province.

Sixty-two training sessions were given in several centres. Some 600 people participated, over 10% attending more than one workshop. Many of the participating companies decided that the experience was worth sending employees to subsequent sessions. Satisfaction with the workshops was high. Seventy-five per cent of the participants rated them as being either excellent or very good. As a result of the conference and the sessions, many New Brunswick SMEs started to take their first steps in training and quality programs.

Persuading managers to institute better management practices is one side of the equation. The needs of employees must also be met, especially as a first reaction is to resist changes to work patterns. A program to address workplace literacy in Nova Scotia demonstrates one way to overcome this resistance, to the benefit of both company and workforce.

A series of workshops organized by ACOA and its partners helps SMEs improve managerial skills.

New Brunswick's mix of rural and urban areas meant we had to be flexible about schedules and delivery. Local people delivered many of the workshops in their region. We spread the business and opportunities around. That approach made it more accessible.

Annette Comeau, President and CEO,
New Brunswick Training Group Inc.

We looked at examples of marketing materials, examined the rationale behind them, discussed new ways to market, and listened and learned from each other. Because it was delivered in our area, I knew many of the participants and the successes they'd already achieved. That had a real impact.

Billie Jo McIntosh, owner of
Nana's Pantry Soaps, Riverbank, N.B.

Example 3: Workplace Literacy

Workplace literacy is related to quality control. ACOA has been involved in the Workplace Literacy program since 1994 through the Canada-Nova Scotia COOPERATION Agreement on Economic Diversification. Other partners in the program include:

- Employers and unions, providing both financial contributions and helping pay for materials;
- The National Literacy Secretariat of Human Resources Development Canada; and
- Participants in the program, who must also make a financial commitment.

ACOA and its partners help build a support structure to teach basic workplace literacy skills.

The breadth of this partnership, and the financial commitment involved (\$848,000 from the COOPERATION Agreement since 1994, plus contributions from other partners) are testament to the importance of the challenge of workplace literacy. But the relatively modest contributions each year from the COOPERATION Agreement have levered impressive amounts of money from other sources. In 1996-97, for example, direct contributions of \$245,000 leveraged a further \$439,000 from other sources.

Projects involving an employer are for a term of three years, with a declining contribution in each year. Surveys have indicated, however, that a significant number of work sites continue the program after government assistance has run out. Participating companies indicate concrete results from the program. Russell Metals credits the program with obtaining ISO 9000 certification after an earlier attempt had foundered due to the low education levels and knowledge retention of some of its workers. A program for the tourist industry in Baddeck, Cape Breton resulted in a marked improvement in the knowledge and interest of employees, and in the quality of the service they offered. The program has been held up as a model by the Conference Board of Canada in its report *The Economic Benefits of Improving Literacy Skills in the Workplace*.

The program has been carried out at an average cost of \$3,500 per site compared with anything between \$15,000 and \$50,000 per site elsewhere in Canada. Other jurisdictions have shown an interest in following Nova Scotia's example.

Procurement and Advocacy

Helping Atlantic companies get more and better federal procurement contracts or sub-contracts is the aim of ACOA's procurement and advocacy activities.

ACOA does this in several ways, including arranging for principal contractors to tour the region to see what SMEs can do. For example, when the Diesel Division of General Motors and Hughes Delco Systems Operations received a contract to build Armored

Personnel Carriers (APC) for the Department of National Defence, ACOA arranged a Supplier Development Prospecting Tour in 1996 as a means for Atlantic companies to take advantage of the \$152 million Industrial and Regional Benefits commitment built into the contract. As a result, several companies in the region got work on the APC contract, including Apex Machine Works, L & A, and Thomas Equipment, from New Brunswick; IMP - Aerospace Division from Nova Scotia; and NewTech Instruments Ltd, Garland Systems Ltd, and Steelcor from Newfoundland.

Another area of interest is in space-related scientific and manufacturing activity. ACOA has a strategic partnership with the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) that builds on the region's scientific and technology capabilities, and enables SMEs to benefit from space projects. ACOA has worked with the CSA and the four Atlantic provinces to encourage space-related R&D in the fields of Automation and Robotics, Space Technology Development and Microgravity Sciences. These efforts will expand space capabilities and enhance the commercialization of space technologies within Atlantic Canada.

Several SMEs have benefited from the ACOA/CSA partnership:

- Transportable Satellite Imaging Terminal, started as a \$1 million development contract, is now being designed and built by a small Halifax company, IOSAT Inc. to assist the CSA and its commercial partner to market Canadian Radarsat products worldwide;
- Guigné International Ltd of Paradise, Newfoundland received a contract in January 1997 for an intermediate upgrade program for the space-drums acoustic levitator for materials science research in microgravity. This contract is valued at \$527,653;
- Measurand Inc. in New Brunswick received a contract in August 1997 valued at \$899,606 for the adaptation of advanced film animation techniques to a control environment. This contract is sponsored under the CSA STEAR Program which was established to encourage Canadian companies, universities and research organizations to develop new robotics and automation technologies with commercial and space applications;
- Stratos Network Research Inc in Newfoundland received a \$416,488 contract in August 1997 for the development of an open systems approach to satellite data communications;
- Advanced Medical Technologies (AMT) of Charlottetown has received approximately \$1.7 million in space subcontract work in recent years in machining sub-contracts from Spar Aerospace, the prime contractor for the government's Space Station Mobile Servicing System project.

Chapter 5

Entrepreneurship

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development published ACOA's Entrepreneurship Strategy in 1996. In its introduction to the book, the OECD Secretariat noted that the strategy is particularly interesting "... because it makes the promotion of entrepreneurship an explicitly stated objective. Often, policy is framed in terms of helping firms export, introduce new technologies, train their workforce, etc. In contrast, the Canadian government outlined a comprehensive strategy to improve the effectiveness of government support for small and medium sized enterprises. ... The Canadian strategy is a long-term one, yet early results are promising."

OECD, The Implementation of an Entrepreneurship Development Strategy in Canada: The Case of the Atlantic Region

Entrepreneurs are the future of the Atlantic economy. More than half of all gross new jobs in the region are created by entrepreneurs starting new businesses. An Atlantic region with more entrepreneurs, and more people in every community with a desire to stay there and start a business, is a region moving steadily and confidently towards improved self-reliance and prosperity.

This vision was introduced in ACOA's entrepreneurship development strategy in 1990, and it remains central to the Agency's mandate. Since its inception, the Agency has been involved in over 650 entrepreneurship development projects, planning them, funding them, and completing them. Each project contributed

to two principal goals - to increase the number of Atlantic Canadians in business for themselves, and helping them succeed and grow.

ACOA's Entrepreneurship Strategy has five key elements:

- **Research:**

To create a more entrepreneurial culture, it is necessary to understand how entrepreneurs evolve. ACOA supports ongoing research on entrepreneurship and small business development. Since 1993, there have been research projects on home-based businesses, Francophone entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs, young entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial start-ups. The Agency has also produced various editions of a handbook entitled "The State of Small Business and Entrepreneurship in Atlantic Canada".

- **Awareness and Promotion:**

Promoting entrepreneurship as a practical alternative to traditional forms of employment means being aware of the challenges of being entrepreneur. ACOA does this by participating in regional and national entrepreneurship recognition awards, publishing profiles of entrepreneurs and supporting TV programs such as "The Leading Edge" and "Temps d'Affaires" which highlight entrepreneurial role models.

Thanks to our partnership with ACOA in the production of the television series "Temps d'Affaires", more than 12,000 Francophone viewers in Atlantic Canada have been exposed each week to the challenges and advantages of entrepreneurship. This enables us to demystify and promote entrepreneurship and encourage more people to get started in business. This is a perfect example of the contribution ACOA makes to the development of our business community.

(Ronald Drisdelle, Executive Director, Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick.)

- **Orientation and Education:**

Going beyond the general awareness of entrepreneurship, people must know how to become entrepreneurs. Much of ACOA's focus in this area has been on young people. For example, a partnership with departments of education has been instrumental in introducing approximately 60,000 public school students to entrepreneurship concepts in the classroom. A start has been made to do the same in the region's colleges.

- **Training and Counselling:**

Entrepreneurs just starting up or expanding their businesses need access to reliable counselling and training. ACOA joins partners such as economic commissions, Community Business Development Corporations, university business schools, and others to make sure advice is available when it is needed.

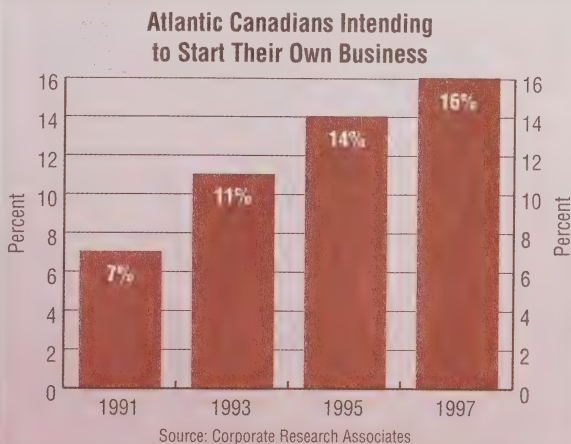
- **Network Building:**

The level of interaction among entrepreneurs is a strong indicator of the entrepreneurial vitality of a region. ACOA fosters events where those building an entrepreneurial culture can meet to communicate, share ideas, and coordinate activities with entrepreneurs.

A strategy to change people's attitudes, and translate those attitudes into new business start-ups, must be evaluated over the long term. Early results, however, are promising. For example, some 16% of Atlantic Canadians expressed the "intent to form a small business in the next two years" in 1997, compared with 7% in 1991. While it is not easy to determine the precise impact of ACOA's contribution, the Agency activity can be considered a major factor given its level of involvement in the promotion and support to entrepreneurship development.

As a young entrepreneur, it can be very helpful to come together with other young entrepreneurs to talk and share ideas. Until we teamed up with ACOA, there was no association for young entrepreneurs in Atlantic Canada. Through a partnership with ACOA, we are now establishing chapters of the Young Entrepreneurs Association in each province.

*Tom Hickey, A/President,
Young Entrepreneurs Association - Atlantic*



Building this entrepreneurship support structure remains central to ACOA's mandate. In the following pages are some specific examples of projects involving entrepreneurial activities.

Example 1: The Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development (CEED)

ACOA helps set up a centre to increase and study entrepreneurship through the education system.

This has private and public sector partners, and is funded in part by project revenues. CEED's goals are:

- to bring entrepreneurship training to all parts of Nova Scotia's education system;
- to enhance the entrepreneurial spirit and development structures in Nova Scotia;
- to establish a catalyst and focal point to promote individuals, organizations, and agencies involved in economic development; and
- to establish Nova Scotia as a world leader in the research, development, and implementation of entrepreneurship education programs.

The Centre, through Open for Business, has been a wonderful place to share and gain information. It has provided an opportunity for us to meet and network with other young entrepreneurs. If I'm looking for a certain type of service, I can find it through Open for Business or the Centre.

Charles Crosby, Crosby Communications Group

The cost of starting up CEED was \$2.3 million, with contributions from the Canada-Nova Scotia COOPERATION Agreement on Economic Diversification, the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, and private-sector participants including Maritime Tel & Tel, the Royal Bank of Canada, and numerous SMEs from the province.

CEED started in late 1995, and has been involved in over 40 projects since then. It has reached some 40,000 young people through courses, summer camps, conferences, and programs. The Centre is active in programs from Grade 3 to Grade 12. In the 1996-97 academic year, 1,756 students in 55 schools were registered in its Grade 12 course on entrepreneurship. Full-time employees of the Centre are supplemented by students hired for four-month terms, to gain entrepreneurial experience and help in various projects. CEED's Open for Business Program directly results in five to ten business start-ups a month. The Centre reports it is involved in about 1,000 business start-ups a year.

A Venture Centre (a satellite of CEED) opened in the Fall of 1997 in Antigonish, and two others are scheduled for the Fall of 1998 in Yarmouth and Shelburne. These will allow students to start their own businesses while taking regular high school courses tailored to the business they are running.

Example 2: Promoting Entrepreneurship in Special Communities

Initiatives in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have been designed for special communities. The Black Business Initiative (BBI) is a partnership to bring improved entrepreneurial skills and opportunities to Nova Scotia's Black community.

A consultation process initially identified constraints to the community's development.

BBI was approved in mid-1995, and has a five-year, \$5-million commitment from the Canada-Nova Scotia COOPERATION Agreement on Economic Diversification. It has four aims:

- to help create economic independence of individuals;
- to further entrepreneurial development, education and training in the Black community;
- to build partnerships and linkages to the broader business community; and
- to create and improve access to private and public sector business support.

ACOA joins partnerships to bring specially- tailored programs to the Black community in Nova Scotia and to Aboriginals in New Brunswick.

Since starting, BBI has made 32 loans through its loan fund, and six investments through an equity investment fund. There have been five community development projects, and 46 other forms of financial assistance. These activities have resulted in 52 full-time and 30 part-time jobs being created, and 53 full-time and 27 part-time jobs being sustained. BBI's seven staff members work out of the Canada Business Service Centre in Halifax, but serve a wider constituency through a Website.

BBI's participation in trade shows and missions has helped at least two entrepreneurs into new markets for their products. Dana Emmerson, President of Environmental Disposal Concepts Ltd of Dartmouth, took his patented fluorescent lightbulb crusher to a trade show in Boston, and sold 20 of them. "Without trade missions like this," Mr Emmerson says, "it's hard for businesses to get set up in bigger markets like Boston." Brad Miller, who owns Classic Cheesecakes in Sydney, also went to Boston. "Two distributors and the Market Basket (a chain of 57 grocery stores) will be carrying four of my products," says Brad.

ACOA's involvement in a program to deliver entrepreneurial skills to New Brunswick's Aboriginal people has involved tailoring ACOA's particular expertise in entrepreneurial development, providing access to information and services, and coordinating with other partners for effective delivery of programs.

There are 15 First Nations Communities and one Off-Reserve Council in New Brunswick, with a total population of about 10,000 people. The Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI) has existed since 1994 to further Aboriginal economic development in the province. It is a three-way federal-provincial-Aboriginal initiative that identifies and pursues opportunities that contribute to Aboriginal economic development. The Chair of JEDI is shared by ACOA, a provincial representative and a First Nations' representative. Other partners in the initiative include the Business Development Bank of Canada, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and Aboriginal Business Canada.

*I just knew I had
some business in me...
The [Step- In]
Program was
wonderful.*

*Ronalda Ward,
aspiring residential rental
property owner*

*Ms Ward was one of 15
women from the Red Bank
and Eel Ground First
Nations who graduated
from a Step-in course in
April 1998, delivered by
the Business Development
Bank and paid for by
ACOA and HRDC.*

Aligning entrepreneurial development programs with the special needs of Aboriginals has been a challenging job, requiring ACOA's coordination experience. The Agency has hired two Coordinators (both of them Aboriginals) to help deliver the program. Four other coordinators have been hired for field operations as part of JEDI. Three programs designed with specific constituencies in mind are:

- Step-in Program, a training and mentoring initiative designed specifically for women entrepreneurs who wish to start, or have recently launched, a small business. This involves between 220 and 280 hours of training, mentoring, roundtable discussions and networking with SME resource people to enhance the understanding of what it takes to develop and run a business, and in particular to prepare a business plan.
- Business Opportunity Program, designed to help people identify ideas for potential business opportunities. It is an 18 to 30 hour program after which participants are ready to prepare a business plan, and leads to initiatives such as the Step-In Program.
- Youth Entrepreneur Program, aimed at 18 to 29 year-olds, provides exposure to small business through classroom training and presentations by guest speakers. Lasting about 100 hours, it is intended to raise the awareness of young people to SME potentials and opportunities.

ACOA's principal roles within JEDI have been to smooth clients' access to services (tailoring programs to the specific needs of Aboriginals); and to coordinate the approach of several other important partners to Aboriginal entrepreneurial development. The initiative demonstrates, once again, how ACOA has increasingly become the federal representative for a wide array of programs in Atlantic Canada. Flexibility and adaptability are the hallmarks of the Agency's approach in projects that adapt existing programs to cater to the needs of specific communities.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, ACOA continued to support the work of the Torngait Ujagannaivingit Corporation (TUC) near Nain, Labrador. This wholly owned subsidiary of the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation quarries anorthosite stone blocks for export. In 1997-98, the Agency supported the construction of a facility to process anorthosite blocks in Hopedale, Labrador.

Young people
are introduced to
entrepreneurship
in innovative ways.

Example 3: YMCA-YWCA Enterprise Centres in St John's and Glace Bay

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Enterprise Olympics is an annual competition organized by the St John's YMCA-YWCA Enterprise Centre. Budding entrepreneurs attend seminars given by successful, established

entrepreneurs, and then play games geared towards creating an entrepreneurial spirit - here's a new product, develop a marketing plan in half an hour. Students also participate in a trade show, where the booths are judged on the creativity both of their design and business idea.

The Y-Enterprise Centre sees this focus on youth as important in developing a healthy entrepreneurial attitude. The Centre provides assistance to individuals considering starting their own businesses. Counsellors help clients develop business plans, and they can even help secure funding to get a

business off the ground. The process is as important, if not more important, than the end result. The Centre operates on core funding from ACOA and Human Resources Development Canada. Building an entrepreneurial culture remains at the heart of ACOA's mandate. The younger the audience, the better the chance of building that culture.

In the five years 1993 through 1997, the Y-Enterprise Centre has handled 6,600 enquiries, dealt with 1,054 clients, and can claim a share in 128 business starts. Some 238 jobs were created in these new businesses. The Centre reports that 70% of them are still in existence.

Another Enterprise Centre is attached to the YMCA in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. Originally started in 1987 by Employment and Immigration Canada (now HRDC), it now has five employees assisted by two summer students. By early 1998, the Centre had instructed almost 1,000 clients through its entrepreneurial training and skills programs, had helped 273 businesses start up, and helped create almost 600 jobs. Some 41% of these businesses are still operating.

Young people like the Y-Enterprise Centre. "Your staff's professionalism contributed to the successful completion of my business plan. I now have a basis to start from and can build on a solid foundation."

Geoffrey Moulton, InterFax Inc

All in all, I would recommend the Y-Enterprise Centre to anyone who is planning to start their own business. The knowledge and assistance I received from the staff was invaluable.

Cheryl Parsons

Chapter 6

Tourism

The Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership is "... a major step toward achieving a focussed, co-ordinated approach to developing Atlantic Canada's tourism industry."

Report of the Auditor General to the House of Commons, November 1995

Our industry is largely made up of small businesses which operate with limited resources. The Agreement [Atlantic Canada Agreement on Tourism] brings both small and large operators together with both levels of government to create advantages that we could not otherwise achieve on our own.

John Slipp, President, Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick

Perhaps in no other part of the Atlantic economy has ACOA done more to promote a regional approach than in tourism, developing new partnerships in what has traditionally been a very fragmented sector. The result has been evidence of increasing synergy among partners, each bringing different qualities and resources to the partnership. There are several examples in which ACOA has played a significant role.

The **Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership (ACTP)** began in 1993 with ACOA, the four provincial tourism departments, and the four provincial tourism industry associations, and Tourism Canada (now the Canadian Tourism Commission) as partners. It has a mandate of building a strong industry-government relationship to develop and promote Atlantic tourism. Since 1994, ACTP has been supplementing the domestic and international tourism marketing efforts of the provinces with strong advertising and direct mail campaigns on behalf of the entire region.

Since 1994, targets for advertising have been central Canada, New England, the Tri-State Area (New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey), England, Germany, and Japan. The incremental impact of this spending in 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997 is estimated to be \$66 million in tourism revenues. These marketing efforts have resulted in a significant return on the expenditure of public funds. For instance, the most recent campaign, in 1997, resulted in close to six dollars of tourist expenditure for every dollar of campaign cost. A total of 268,000 inquiries were generated by marketing campaigns over the four years, and about 25% of inquiries translated into actual visits to bring about 67,000 new tourists to the region. Some 65 private-sector companies and organizations spent over \$1.5 million in ACTP-led cooperative marketing campaigns.

ACTP has also provided tourism industry stakeholders with a forum for discussing common issues, sharing perspectives and solutions, conducting market research, adopting regional policy positions, and developing joint action plans. One such forum was the 1996 conference "Atlantic Canada Tourism: Growing into the 21st Century," which led to the 1997 Atlantic Canada Agreement on Tourism. This is funded 50% by ACOA, is administered by ACTP, and provides financial resources for the Partnership's activities through March, 2000.

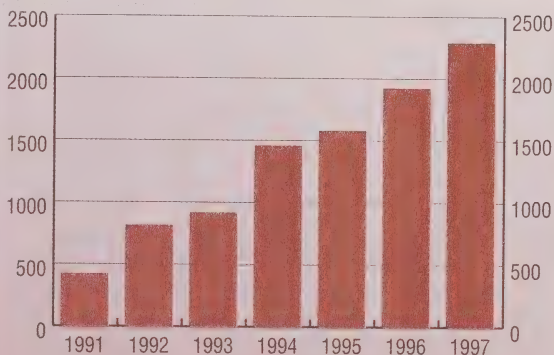
If ACTP emphasizes marketing, the Atlantic Canada Tourism Grading Authority (ACTGA) addresses quality in tourist accommodation. Founded in 1990, ACTGA is a non-profit organization with a mandate to promote and standardize roofed accommodation grading in the region. ACOA has been a key financial supporter of ACTGA.

Tourists are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and expect to stay in high quality accommodations. Uniform standards are marketing tools that are particularly useful to small operators not associated with the name recognition of a large chain.

The numbers of accommodations graded in the region increased from 415 in 1991 to 2,284 in 1997. A grading program for campgrounds began in 1995, with 166 graded in 1997.

Apart from the numbers involved, there is evidence that ACTGA's progress has resulted in other successes. There have been greater efficiencies as grading has been combined with licensing in three of the four provinces (except Nova Scotia). ACTGA has also pioneered the development and implementation of the Canada Select rating system, now being used more and more across Canada. The standard Canada Select one-star rating is now considered the minimum requirement for licensing in the three participating Atlantic provinces. ACTGA is beginning to sell its experience and skills in other parts of Canada, delivering programs in accommodation ratings system implementation, quality assurance, and training for tourism sector workers.

Accommodations Graded



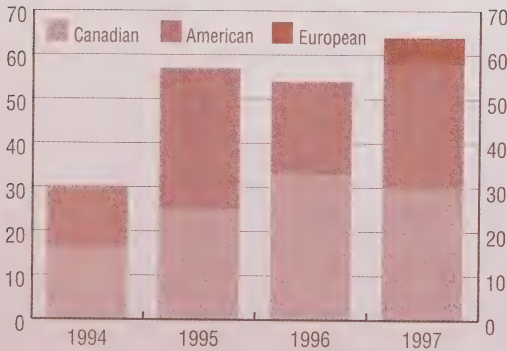
Source: Atlantic Canada Tourism Grading Authority

In the last two years, the number of people who have chosen us because of our rating has jumped dramatically. Visitors are constantly telling me they feel more comfortable depending on a consistent rating system.

*Marianne Larsen, Larsen's Log Lodge,
Millville, New Brunswick,*

quoted in the February 1998 newsletter of Tourism Excellence Inc.

Buyers Attending the Showcase



Another form of marketing partnership is embodied in the **Atlantic Canada Tourism Showcase**, which began in 1994 and involves ACOA, the four provincial departments of tourism and tourism industry associations. The Showcase is a forum where Atlantic tourism operators can meet buyers, especially bus tour companies. The number of sellers at the Showcase rose from 74 in 1994 to 164 in 1997. The number of buyers has also increased significantly, including European representatives in 1997 for the first time.

Follow-up surveys have allowed assessment of the economic impact of the Showcase. For the motorcoach sector

alone, the estimated impact quadrupled from \$10 million in 1994 to \$40 million in 1997. This is an incremental impact, in that it covers only those bus tour companies that decided to come to Atlantic Canada after attending the Showcase.

As well as these pan-Atlantic approaches to tourism development, ACOA has been an active supporter in several very promising projects at the provincial level.

Example 1: Celtic Colours International Festival

ACO supports a festival that celebrates Cape Breton's musical heritage.

Celtic music is one of the foundations of Cape Breton's culture. The inaugural Celtic Colours International Festival in October 1997 was an opportunity to showcase local talent, celebrate strong cultural traditions, and establish an event that has already had solid economic benefits. The festival featured over 300 musicians from Cape Breton and elsewhere in an event that attracted an estimated 4,000 off-island visitors and that was ranked in the top 100 North

American attractions by the American Bus Association. The Festival served to extend the yearly tourist season and build a strong basis for an annual event.

We also feel that our extended season was successful, and know that Celtic Colours contributed to that success. Most of the people that came through our front door were here on the Island for the Festival.

Rodney Chiasson, Manager, Nova Scotia Highland Village

The Festival was organized by the Celtic Colours Festival Society with financial support from sources including ACOA,

the provincial government and corporate sponsors (Doane Raymond, Budget Rent-a-Car, and FORTIS). The \$620,000 Festival resulted in an estimated \$2.9-3.5 million contribution to the Cape Breton economy with attendance at events estimated at 11,700.²⁰ After the Festival, surveys showed that half of tourism businesses that responded said their sales had increased compared with a year earlier. Tourism operators are enthusiastic about the possibilities for the 1998 Festival, and are planning special promotions and packages. Major motorcoach tours have planned specialized itineraries for the event after viewing the popularity of the inaugural Festival.

Example 2: Bouctouche Bay – Inner Bay Trail and Master Plan for Eco-Tourism

The coastal area near Bouctouche in eastern New Brunswick has been transformed into a premier tourist destination that links environment with local culture. The newly-built Irving Eco-Centre La Dune interpretation centre recently won the prestigious British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award. The Centre is one part of a variety of attractions including a network of hiking trails around the inner bay and the Acadian heritage attraction, Pays de la Sagouine. Pays de la Sagouine has seen an increase in visitation from 41,400 in 1993 to 73,000 in 1997. Bouctouche Bay is building on this investment. Visits to the Eco-Centre in 1997 reached 88,500 with almost no advertising.

*By working together
to develop the coastal
dunes ... we are all
creating a public trust
... The Irvings are
very proud to be
involved in this
important project.*

*J.K.Irving,
the Irving Group*

ACOA has participated in the development of tourism infrastructure in the region in several ways. With the provincial government, the community, and the private sector as partners, it helped develop an integrated eco-tourism master plan that has guided development. ACOA also helped build the Inner Bay Trail linking the various attractions in the area. The development of a comprehensive ecological and cultural complex of attractions in the Bouctouche area has led to an increase in the number of visitors.

Example 3: The Viking Trail

The Viking Trail is an initiative to develop and market the tourism industry on the Great Northern Peninsula and Labrador Straits area of Newfoundland. Not an actual hiking trail, it is a comprehensive approach which links communities, attractions and facilities in an effort to bring more tourists to the region. Interpretive sites, landscape development, improvements in hotels and restaurants are key elements in building on the cultural heritage of the region to increase its tourist potential.

**Communities on
the Great Northern
Peninsula are
supported in trying
to improve their
tourism industry**

²⁰ Rave Entertainment - Celtic Colours International Festival Final Report.

The year 2000 provides us with a window of opportunity to highlight our region in international spotlights. People will come here to see the Vikings, but they will leave talking about our people and the unique character of our province.

*Randy Letto, marketing manager
of the Viking Trail Tourism Association*

While common signage and marketing efforts are tangible evidence of the Trail, the underlying linkages include partners ranging from all levels of government, including ACOA, communities in the region and the private sector. The Viking Trail Tourism Accord, signed in 1994, identified the partners, their roles, and the strategic direction to prepare the region for the Year 2000 Celebration of the first

Europeans arriving in North America. This partnership was motivated by a common belief that working together would allow the region to reach its tourism potential and help offset the decline in the groundfish industry.

With Viking history going back a thousand years, the region is well positioned to benefit from the growing interest in educational and culture-based tourism. The Viking Millennium Celebration in the year 2000 was once considered the end goal of this initiative. Now, it is seen as the starting point of great things to come.

Chapter 7

Trade

There is a strong link between export expansion and employment growth. Industry Canada estimates that every \$1 billion in exports creates 6,000 to 8,000 new jobs.²¹ ACOA's mandate to foster economic development in Atlantic Canada virtually demands trade development as a priority. Given the additional focus on SMEs, traditionally less export-ready than bigger companies, this part of ACOA's mandate takes on a much sharper focus.

International Business Development

The Canada-Atlantic Provinces COOPERATION Agreement on International Business Development (IBD) was originally a three-year, \$3-million agreement signed in 1994. Based on the lessons learned and results achieved, the Agreement was extended in 1997 for another three years with another \$2 million. IBD serves both as a mechanism for building essential trade infrastructure and as a means for SMEs to gain export experience. It supports a key priority of ACOA - trade - and provides a forum for cooperation and coordination of knowledge, action, and financial resources to help Atlantic companies develop international business. The Agreement involves three federal departments and the four provincial governments.

A region-wide agreement seeks to build an essential trade infrastructure for SMEs.

IBD is significant in that it enables the Atlantic Provinces to take advantage of economies of scale in trade development and contributes to the overall Team Canada initiative. As well, the Agreement allows each province, with a relatively small investment, to leverage substantial resources in building trade infrastructure or establishing new markets. By doing this, the region and its firms can gain wider recognition and penetration into foreign markets.

As of March 1998, 486 Atlantic SME participants on IBD projects have been surveyed to provide an indication of progress and results to date. Based on responses from 295 companies, firms attribute the following results to their participation in the IBD:

- 38.6% of respondents had started exporting or increased their exports;
- 52.2% had identified potential new markets;
- 64.1% had established specific contacts in export markets; and
- 46.4% had made adjustments to their products or processes as a result of their participation in projects.

²¹ Industry Canada 1998-99 Estimates - Part III - A Report on Plans and Priorities.

New Brunswick Training Group Inc.

A group of New Brunswick educators and trainers begin to export their services.

About five years ago, ACOA recognized the opportunity for exporting the services of the New Brunswick commercial training and education industry. A focus group of industry representatives helped ACOA "seed" the idea of forming an alliance for trade purposes. The New Brunswick Training Group Inc. (NBTGI) was formed in 1994, and has since provided an opportunity for its members to prepare for, and focus on, trade and to share market intelligence and experiences gained through networking. NBTGI includes private companies in both traditional and technology-based training, as well as universities and the New Brunswick Community Colleges. It has become an alliance focused on exporting the knowledge-based services of its members.

NBTGI is unusual in that it seeks to export services from Atlantic Canada, rather than goods. There has been considerable effort in developing policies, preparing business and marketing plans, and identifying mandate and strategy.

Recently, NBTGI got its first Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) contract. The alliance will manage a project under CIDA's Youth Internship Program that involves hiring 20 young people as interns to provide Internet training in ten Francophone countries where CIDA has already invested in the installation of servers. This project is a major accomplishment and could open doors for other CIDA projects.

There will be other benefits. The CIDA contract involves a partnership with the Canadian Centre for International Studies and Cooperation which has been involved in contracts with CIDA for many years and has placed some 900 interns in over 23 countries. Its international experience and expertise will not only assure a smooth entry for the NBTGI, but will also provide some transfer of knowledge. The Centre has expressed interest in partnering with NBTGI on a long-term basis, thereby recognizing it as an ideal vehicle to develop consortia with both public and private sectors. NBTGI also is pursuing opportunities for contract work in Romania, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Chapter 8

Community-Based Economic Development (CBED)

CBED is collective action by a community to improve its economic health. ACOA's goal is to strengthen the capacity of local organizations to plan and implement their own economic priorities, and help realize their potential. Beginning in 1993, the Agency, in cooperation with provincial governments in Newfoundland, Prince Edward island and Nova Scotia, began a process of restructuring which has resulted in the consolidation of the many local agencies involved in economic development. New Brunswick had already restructured 20 years ago. Under the federal Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS), the Agency is implementing a special Community Economic Development program to assist communities affected by the groundfish closure to develop employment opportunities. Since the Agency assumed responsibility for the federal Community Futures Program in 1995, it has worked to include the Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) in the partnership among government, the communities and business.

CBDCs are independent, not-for-profit organizations controlled by community volunteers and which provide lending and counselling services to small businesses in rural communities. An important role for the CBDCs is to ensure that their lending activities are consistent with the regional strategic plans developed by the local organizations.

In a period of increasingly scarce resources, effective partnerships have become crucial for a community to achieve its economic goals. ACOA's role in these partnerships is to bring information, expertise, and professional and technical support. The Agency advocates community priorities with other federal departments and coordinates support in areas such as provision of information, innovation, entrepreneurship, export trade development, infrastructure (through the Canada Infrastructure Works Program), and access to capital.

As partners with communities in their own development, ACOA also helps develop more effective region-wide linkages among local and provincial agencies and provides assistance, with provincial governments, to CBED organizations, to plan and implement local priorities and to provide services in support of local SMEs. A major strength of the Atlantic CBED initiative is the approximately 1,200 volunteers who are dedicated to the economic development of their community. With their intimate knowledge of local conditions, CBED organizations are often well placed to deliver programs for small business. ACOA uses community organizations as agents for delivery of federal services where this is the most effective approach.

Rural communities, where almost half of Atlantic Canadians live, and which often have fewer economic advantages than towns, face particular challenges in realizing their future economic viability. In recognition of this, and in support of the federal government's rural economic renewal initiative announced in 1996, the Agency has

introduced universal coverage of the CBDCs so that all rural Atlantic Canadians have access to their services. In a recent survey of over 400 CBDC clients who had received technical (but not financial) assistance, over one third (36.6%) reported a positive impact from the assistance received. These clients started a new business or expanded their existing business. Two-thirds of respondents reported time savings by visiting the centre. Clients who did not start businesses pointed out that they appreciated receiving advice which prevented them from making bad investments. Over 82% of clients would positively recommend the centre to their families and friends. Since assuming responsibility for CBDCs, ACOA has provided extra investment funds to meet the loan demands of rural SMEs.

By its nature, CBED is a long-term process in mobilizing the community's resources toward common goals. The examples below demonstrate that successful development must be driven from within the community. Where the approach has been successful, it has been because of persistent effort over many years, strong leadership in the community, and the mobilization of a broad base of volunteers dedicated to cooperate to achieve economic gains. With this in mind, support from ACOA for CBED is structured to try to ensure that the community becomes increasingly self-reliant and assumes accountability for its own development.

Economic development on the Burin Peninsula is alive and well. There are good things happening here, and I believe now that we have charted a course for the future..."

Paul Pike,
Chair, Schooner
(Burin Peninsula,
Zone 16) REDB

Strengthening Local Economic Structures: The Example of Newfoundland

Since ACOA's last Five-Year Report to Parliament, the approach to community economic development has been transformed in Newfoundland. While still in their infancy, the model, the blueprint and the progress to date point toward a much more effective, participatory, and strategic approach to CBED. The genesis of the restructuring dates back to the province's 1992 Strategic Economic Plan, which introduced the concept of a zonal approach. A Task Force began its work in May 1994, with an ACOA-led representation of the federal government, the provincial government, the Newfoundland and Labrador Rural Development Council, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities, Community Futures Committees, and the business sector. It held 22 public consultation sessions and received over 250 written briefs.

Community Matters: The Report of the Task Force on Community Economic Development was released in early 1995. In it federal and provincial governments announced support for the creation of Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs) for the purpose of planning and implementing regional economic development initiatives at the zone level.

To set this process in motion, provisional boards were established, drawing on traditional (regional development associations, Community Futures committees) and non-traditional partners in economic development (municipalities, and the business and education sectors). Within a framework of guidelines set by government, the provisional boards determined the appropriate size, composition and selection process for permanent REDBs in their zones. Since then, 19 permanent REDBs have been established. Each has spent its first year developing a strategic plan for its zone. These outline a five-year strategy for economic development in each zone, and have been the basis for the negotiation of performance contracts, which outline the mutual objectives and responsibilities of REDBs and government and the (annual) accountability mechanisms. To date, 17 zones have had their strategic plans approved.

While it is too early to measure outcomes from this new approach, it is evident that economic growth and employment creation are being enhanced through better coordination and integration of programs and resources. Both the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador view REDBs as a vital mechanism for developing regional economies. This new structure is consistent with governments' philosophy of an integrated approach to regional economic development; one that encourages innovative partnerships among all sectors of society.

Part of the reason the process was so successful was because the private sector was heavily involved in the consultations. They drove the working groups almost single-handedly..."

*Manual Hackett
Economic Development
Officer, Burin REDB*

Partnerships in Community-Based Economic Development: The Example of Greater Moncton

ACOA commissioned a detailed case study of the Greater Moncton development effort to investigate the extent to which local cooperation and self-reliance contributed to the area's recent economic successes and to identify what lessons the experience held for other places in Atlantic Canada.²² The study concluded that local partnership is the key component.

An early, broadly based partnership emerged after a major employer, the CN shops, had shut down, resulting in major job loss in the area. This initiative by the community resulted in the 1989 "Symposium 2000", which, with the support of ACOA and the provincial government, began the strategic planning process for economic recovery. Symposium 2000 convinced the people that they could re-invent their

Shaken by loss of major industries, Greater Moncton fights back by mobilizing community resources and coordinating with essential partners.

²² Partnerships in Community Economic Development: The Example of Greater Moncton, Maurice Mandale and P.Y. Chiasson, consultants, March 1998.

community (and that they had little real choice but to do so). The Greater Moncton Economic Commission (GMEC) emerged from Symposium 2000, and rapidly became the lead development agency for the community.

GMEC produced the first strategic plan for local economic growth in 1991. (It has been updated twice since.) The plan identified the objectives, structures and partnerships necessary for implementation and served as a focal point for volunteers (as many as 500 working at a time). Early successes witnessed the employment targets of the 1991 and 1994 plans being reached ahead of time. There have been many partners to the overall plan (ACOA, the Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce, the three municipalities, federal and provincial departments, the University of Moncton (UdeM), community college campuses, and individual business people) and many more to distinct components of the plan – including the biggest and most important partner of all, the individual and collective citizens in the area.

One of the distinct components of the plan was to develop the teleservice industry in Moncton. The local business community was quick to show enthusiasm for teleservice as a new and viable industry, and GMEC took the lead to sell the community's assets - bilingualism and ample availability of office space, for example - to respond to the provincial government's efforts to attract new telecommunications-related activity to New Brunswick. Other local partners included: the community college campuses, which provided customized training programs; the Moncton Response Group (an ACOA-delivered federal program set up to offset the impacts of military base closure), which worked with the community colleges to set up a database of pre-qualified workers; and NBTel, which created a Disaster Recovery Centre to aid teleservice companies to keep on running if their regular centre was shut down unexpectedly. Teleservice firms interviewed during this study often indicated they would likely have located elsewhere were it not for the level and quality of services provided by NBTel.

This component, and the partnership involved with it, resulted in more than 3,000 new jobs for Greater Moncton and a still growing diversification of the local economy.

Another distinct component of the current strategic plan is the creation of a Scientific Park at UdeM. UdeM itself assumed leadership of the partnership that developed the park, where university and private sector researchers could work together on new marketable technology-based products. Joining GMEC and UdeM were the City of Moncton, the provincial government, ACOA and private companies.

The cornerstone of the park is Concept+, which has emerged from a federally-supported research institute set up at UdeM in 1983. Concept+ partners with private firms on a fee-for-service basis to develop new technology products. Concept+ assists about 50 firms a year. Many clients have said they would not be in business without this

support. Economic spin-offs involving six technology-based companies alone include the creation of 200 well-paid jobs in applied R&D, and payrolls amounting to \$7.5 million a year. Companies that seek help from Concept+ are often supported by ACOA either financially or through provision of technical advice.

An important part of ACOA's role in community development partnerships such as these is to help bring the resources of the federal government to the partnership, and match federal programs with local needs. This includes financial support (mainly from ACOA and the provincial government, but also from the Business Development Bank of Canada). Training comes from the UdeM and the community college. R&D support is from UdeM and the National Research Council, with contributions also from ACOA and the provincial government. Other information and advice is mainly from GMEC and the provincial government, plus ACOA.

A case study of 18 firms sought to determine the incremental impact of their involvement with partnerships in Greater Moncton. Seventeen of the 18 indicated that partners had a considerable impact on their performance in terms of job creation and payroll. Total employment of these 17 firms rose from 313 in 1990 to 1,966 in 1997. Eleven of the 18 firms surveyed said they would not be in business in Moncton without partners. These 11 employed over 1,000 people in 1997 and had sales of over \$60 million. Another six firms indicated their growth would have been slower without partners. Several firms were especially satisfied with their partnership with ACOA, which responded efficiently to requests for financial assistance.

I'm very impressed with the capability of ACOA. We would not be in Atlantic Canada without ACOA's support. We are glad to be here.

*David Wallace,
CEO, Micro-Optics
Design Corp.*

Does the Greater Moncton example indicate that CBED is becoming more locally self-sustaining? It does, in that the community now prepares its own strategic plans, sets its own priorities, and mobilizes the immense energies of local volunteers in implementing plans. CBED, however, does require money and expertise which is not always available in the community.

Greater Moncton does hold lessons for other places: it makes a strong case for communities; seizing the initiative to chart their own futures; identifying and employing local advantages, assets, leadership, and energies; and initiating development at the local level, where the community knows what it has and what it wants. The contribution of ACOA in coordinating the provision of technical advice and financial support from the federal government can be vital to success.

Victoria Wharf

A village mobilizes to rebuild and redevelop its wharf, a central focus for the community.

Victoria, a picturesque fishing village on the south shore of Prince Edward Island, also demonstrates what can be accomplished when development ideas are locally initiated and driven. Just about all Victoria had in its favour was a proud history as a vital rural community. The partnership that formed to restore the village wharf, the focal point for the community, has rejuvenated the village. The partnership included the community, the provincial government and ACOA.

The wharf bustled with activity in the 1970s. Lobster and pleasure boats tied up alongside, and there was a popular restaurant and fish pound. The restaurant and other businesses closed in the 1980s, and the wharf fell into disrepair. It not only became an eyesore, but threatened the livelihood of 13 local fishermen. Completely rebuilding the wharf would only be one part of the project—there would also have to be a new sewage system, wharf curbing, waterfront railings and bait-house improvements.

The Victoria Wharf project was a major challenge for a small community. It involved not only a million dollars in capital works on and around the wharf, but a commitment to continued effective management for such a large project. The local Central Development Corporation (CDC) immediately recognized the value of the wharf's potential as a tourist and commercial asset, and lost no time in getting involved. ACOA and the provincial government helped the CDC and the community form their ideas into a viable business plan, and joined the wharf project.

There were a lot of hurdles along the way, but ACOA was responsive to the needs of the local area and worked with us to make it happen. The staff were exceptionally helpful, and knew what it would take to get this project off the ground.

Marilyn Murphy, General Manager,
Central Development Corporation

The project was completed by mid-1995, and Victoria had re-established itself as a place where the thousands of tourists who pass by each year could stop. The village's character is such that it has attracted many artisans and other small businesses. There are now pottery and craft shops, tea rooms and cafes, a chocolate manufacturer, art gallery, and live theatre at the Victoria Playhouse. The rebuilt wharf includes a

restaurant capable of accommodating bus tours. The 13 lobster fishermen still have a place to tie up, and there is a fish plant and store in the village. ACOA and the CDC were key partners in this project. ACOA contributed almost half the total costs as it saw positive spin-offs in terms of sustained and new economic activity.

La Picasse

La Picasse is an economic, educational and cultural centre in the small Acadian community of Petit de Grat, on Isle Madame, Cape Breton Island. It is named for a traditional type of wood and stone anchor used in the community (known to Anglo-Scots as a killick). Launched in late 1995, La Picasse incorporates “Le Centre de développement de l’entrepreneuriat”, the local campus of the Collège de l’Acadie, the regional library, the local office of the Federation Acadienne de la Nouvelle Écosse, a pre-school, and a restaurant. By incorporating the development centre within a larger community complex, economic and community development are linked.

Isle Madame has a population of about 4,300 and lost 500 jobs in the early 1990s with the collapse of the groundfish industry. Le Centre de développement de l’entrepreneuriat has been one way the community has partnered with other stakeholders, including ACOA, to meet the challenge of rebuilding the local economy. The centre currently is home to two businesses - the Tradewinds Call Centre and Production Picasse.

The Call Centre has a variety of clients in central Canada and the United States. It boasts lower costs of business due to its rural location and is especially attractive to American clients due to exchange rate advantages. There were 12 employees at the Call Centre in 1997, and based on interest from potential clients, there are indications this number could triple in 1998. Production Picasse manufactures fine earthenware depicting traditional Acadian scenes.

La Picasse is a symbol of the cultural strength of a small Acadian community and the entrepreneurial development centre is a key element in rebuilding the area’s economy. This new cultural and economic infrastructure has become a new “anchor” to the region’s renaissance.

An Acadian community in Cape Breton develops a centre to assist its future economic development.

The Entrepreneurial Development Centre provides space to entrepreneurs willing to take a risk and start up a new company. To date, more than 30 full time jobs have been created, with the arrival of Tradewinds Call Center, we can see additional jobs in the future. In fact, our bilingual work force is an asset to some companies interested in setting up part of their business in our community. We are very grateful for [ACOA’s] contribution and help to make our dream become a reality.

Yvon Samson, Director, La Picasse

Colony of Avalon

A community brings a fascinating part of its history back to life, adding to the local economic diversity in the process.

An important chapter in the history of eastern Canada is preserved at the Colony of Avalon Centre at Ferryland, Newfoundland, which officially opened its doors in mid-1997. As a settlement started in 1621 by Sir George Calvert, first Baron Baltimore, the Colony of Avalon is a heritage site of international significance.

ACOA's ability to be a partner with provincial and non-governmental organizations was a key ingredient in bringing to life the diverse history of the Southern Shore of Newfoundland. Some \$1.8 million was invested in the Colony of Avalon project through two federal-provincial COOPERATION agreements, to develop tourism infrastructure, refurbish a former school to house the Centre, and to finance ongoing archaeological work.

The Colony is one of the prized historic resources of Newfoundland. The site encompasses the influences of Beothuk, Portuguese, French, and English cultures and influences. Preserving the archaeological integrity of the site, while developing interpretive features, is a new type of community economic development. Newfoundland is especially rich in cultural assets, and the Colony of Avalon is a particularly diverse example of this history.

This project is a beacon of hope for the people of the Southern Shore. Through hard work, we are diversifying our economy and building our future on the strength of our unique culture and heritage.

Jerome White, Chair, Colony of Avalon Foundation

The number of visitors to the Ferryland area has increased from 2,500 in the early 1990s to over 11,000 in 1997. Over each of the past five years, between 50 and 60 people have been employed, almost all residents of the Southern Shore.

The Strait East Nova Community Enterprise Network (SENCEN)

SENCEN was designed to lay the foundation for an information technology sector in the Strait of Canso Region of Nova Scotia, an area which takes in the counties of Inverness, Richmond, Victoria, Guysborough and Antigonish. This is being accomplished by:

- Making information technology available to citizens, organizations, and economic initiatives in the Strait area;

- Creating cooperative links with business organizations, universities, community colleges, and private learning institutes; and
- Developing sources of revenue so the organization can pay its own way by the fifth year of operation.

Rural counties establish an integrated IT complex to assist future development.

SENCEN is a partnership of the local school board, three Regional Development Authorities, the Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development and Tourism, and ACOA. Funding of \$507,465 has come from the Canada-Nova Scotia COOPERATION Agreement on Economic Diversification. The significant contribution of local partners is being made in the form of access to facilities, staff time and direct funding.

SENCEN addresses two areas of strategic importance to ACOA: (1) information technology, and (2) community economic development. The results of the project are:

- 63 sites where the public has access to IT;
- Participation in a Telework pilot project creating work in rural Nova Scotia;
- Creation of 47 jobs in IT;
- Delivering online services, community IT training, and professional development to teachers, health professionals, youth at risk, and the unemployed.

“What you have witnessed today is the result of the blending of ideas, financial support, and plain hard work of creative people in creative partnerships.”

*Wilf MacNeil, SENCEN Coordinator,
The Oran, Inverness, Nova Scotia, June 3, 1998*

Retirement Relocation Project

In 1996, the Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority (CBCEDA) approached ACOA with a proposal to market Cape Breton as a good place to retire. CBCEDA's research included examination of a similar project in Elliott Lake, Ontario. The target market would be expatriate Cape Bretoners, specifically those living in Ontario.

ACOA's assistance for the proposal was to collect research to go into a two-year funding proposal to the Canada-Nova Scotia COOPERATION Agreement on Economic Diversification.

Cape Breton tries to persuade people who went down the road to retire back to the Island.

Ross MacLeod is a Cape Bretoner who pursued a career in the federal public service for 30 years, the last 20 years in Ottawa. He retired in May, 1997 and decided to return to Cape Breton after reviewing promotional material from the Retirement Cape Breton project. Nature, friendly people, a low cost of living, and a helping hand from Retirement Relocation staff played a big role in his decision. "The people at Retirement Cape Breton have been very good. Every time you call they go out of their way to help."

Some retirees are still young, vigorous people, interested in working. Vince Cordero returned to Cape Breton, and has established a contracting business that now employs 15 people.

In October, 1997 CBCEDA had assembled a database of 4,592 households that expressed an interest in retiring to Cape Breton. Some 123 people (68 households) actually relocated to Cape Breton from spring 1996 to fall 1997, including 89 former residents. Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation has estimated that the expenditures by retirees has produced the following economic impacts in the Cape Breton economy:

- an increase in household income of \$559,100;
- 37 more full-time equivalent jobs;
- \$181,000 more in federal and provincial taxes, and \$44,500 in municipal taxes; and
- a total impact on Cape Breton's GDP of \$1.3 million.

Chapter 9

ACOA as Federal Delivery Agent

Since the early 1990s, ACOA has become the delivery arm for a number of federal economic initiatives. Its partnership experience with the provinces and other regional stakeholders allows a cost-effective way of implementing ad hoc or community-specific initiatives. Between 1993 and 1998, these have notably included two types of programs: the Canada Infrastructure Works Program for the four Atlantic Provinces, and Adjustment initiatives.

The Canada Infrastructure Works Program (CIWP)

Using the structure of its COOPERATION Program, ACOA administers CIWP in the four provinces on behalf of the federal government. This is a joint federal-provincial-municipal program with each partner providing an equal share of the funding. The purpose of CIWP is to renew municipal infrastructure, create jobs, improve the environment, and enhance Canada's competitiveness while accelerating economic recovery.

A total of \$543.3 million was initially approved for spending in Atlantic Canada for the life of the Program. In 1996, a one-year extension was approved, adding another \$114 million. As of March 31, 1998, approximately 1,400 projects have been approved creating more than 9,500 direct and indirect person-years of employment. Projects generally fell into one of three categories: waste disposal and water supply, roads and streets, and other community needs.

Adjustment

Over the last five years, many Atlantic communities have lost their traditional economic base either through depletion of natural resources, as is the case with the collapse of groundfish stocks, or through rationalization of services following the closure of Canadian Forces Bases. Most of the affected communities were small towns or rural areas where alternative employment is scarce. For most communities, it meant the loss of their main, if not their only employer.

Funds were provided to help the communities explore and develop alternative opportunities. Working with local representatives, ACOA established and supported a community group or authority that would take responsibility for redeveloping the local economic base. Financial support is used for development planning, to help the community give itself a new purpose, to seek new employers, and give itself the tools needed to attract new firms. Generally, the funds are not used for direct assistance to private sector firms, as such support is already available under ACOA's core programming.

Example 1: Slemon Park

Slemon Park is the former CFB Summerside. It is now operated by the independent Slemon Park Corporation, and is home to a number of aerospace companies and training institutes. This has been part of a larger community-renewal project involving local

people, industry, and governments to rebuild Summerside's economy after closure of the military base in the early 1990s. Summerside's economic renewal is an example of how partnerships and prudent investment of government funds can lead to long-term economic benefits.

The base was the economic backbone of Summerside, a town of 8,000 people. With over 1,300 military and civilian employees, it was estimated that 33% of total income in Summerside and 5% of provincial income in Prince Edward Island was connected to the base. When the closure was announced in the 1989 federal budget, the community and the province, fearing economic collapse, scrambled to reverse the decision.

*[Summerside will]
...have a stronger
economy in the long
run, despite the loss
[of the base] or
perhaps because of
it... ACOA has been
very good to
Summerside.*

*Basil Stewart,
Mayor of Summerside*

*The corporation
has primarily
achieved the objective
of being financially
self-sufficient...*

*Slemon Park
Corporation, Annual
Report 1996-97*

Almost ten years after the base closed, none of the earlier predictions of economic collapse have come true. In fact, the economy of Summerside is more diversified, and perhaps in better health, than it was before the base closure.

The federal government gave ACOA the responsibility to work with the community to rebuild its economy. It made a one-time investment of about \$60 million for adjustment; and spent another \$60 million for a tax-processing centre in Summerside. If the base had not been closed, it is estimated it would have cost \$736 million to run over 15 years. A key ingredient in Summerside's recovery has been the transformation of the base into Slemon Park, the site of the Summerside Aerospace Centre, which includes three aerospace firms, Holland College's Aviation Maintenance Institute, the School of Justice, an airport, and a restaurant complex. Employment growth rates at the three aerospace firms ranged from 33% to 153% in 1996-97²³. ACOA contributed funds for the operation of the Park and provided incentives for the location of two aerospace firms to the Park.

The Slemon Park Corporation has reached impressive levels of operation. In fiscal year 1997/98 the corporation leased 497,000 square feet of space. The training institutions at the Park accounted for 39,484 student days of instruction²⁴. The employment level reached 606, exceeding the targeted 500 by over a hundred. The aerospace sector is still expanding, adding more, and higher-paying jobs, for Islanders.

The Summerside experience is an example of community, industry and government partners coming together at a time of potential economic crisis to develop new economic development infrastructures. The community has a healthier, more diverse economic base, and a redundant military installation has been transformed into a community asset.

²³ Slemon Park Corporation, Annual Report 1996-97.

²⁴ Slemon Park Corporation, Activity Report, March 1998

Example 2: The Cornwallis Base Closure: Making the Transition

CFB Cornwallis is located at the western end of Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley. Like CFB Summerside, it had become a bastion in the local economy. When it closed in 1994, prospects were bleak for the surrounding small towns that lost a major source of employment and income. In just four years, however, with the help of the right partners and commitment, the community has bounced back as new industries occupy the former base.

[Cornwallis Park] is attracting a lot of interest. In the next two years, if you didn't know where you were, you wouldn't recognize it.

Premier Russell
MacLellan,
Canadian Press,
March 17, 1998

As one of six military bases in Atlantic Canada which closed in 1994 and 1995, CFB Cornwallis received \$7.5 million in federal funding to assist adjustment. These funds are administered by the Cornwallis Park Development Agency (CPDA) which, after initial growing pains, has had considerable success in developing new economic activities for Annapolis and Digby counties.

There are now 19 businesses operating at the former base, employing 262 people. Most recently, the Shaw Group announced an \$18.5 million plant to manufacture wooden, assemble-it-yourself furniture for the Swedish retail giant IKEA. The former base is also the home of the Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre, and of a Sea Cadet summer camp for the Department of National Defence. In addition, the CPDA has sold the 246 housing units on the former base, and a vibrant new residential community is emerging.

In January 1998, the CPDA sent out "report cards" to give the community an opportunity to rank its activities and offer comments for the Business Plan being prepared for the coming year. Early results indicate the CPDA has been receiving high grades from residents. And that is, indeed, the best indicator of the success of this project—the endorsement of the local community.

The results aren't yet tabulated, but preliminary returns of the recently circulated Cornwallis Park 'report cards' look good—CPDA happy with grades from surveyed residents.

Annapolis Royal
Spectator,
March 10, 1998

With the final allocation of funding disbursed, ACOA's responsibility ends on a high note with the CPDA's success. The local community has assumed full responsibility for its continued redevelopment progress. The CPDA is considered a full-fledged member of the local economic development network in Nova Scotia, and it will continue to seek out opportunities and identify new businesses to locate at the former base.

Chapter 10

Policy Research and Analysis Initiatives

Over the past five years, the ACOA policy team has been involved in several projects which embodied three essential qualities:

1. Involvement of the private sector;
2. Extensive consultation;
3. Keeping an eye on the future.

The Pan-Atlantic Economic Coordination and Research Initiative was first approved in 1992 and has now been extended through 1999-2000. Its purpose is to enhance ACOA's capability to coordinate and plan region-wide federal activities contributing to economic growth in Atlantic Canada and to support economic research projects with regional applicability. It has proven to be an important and flexible instrument for initiating policy research, building public/private-sector networks and partnerships, and supporting the core federal policy precept of building a strong national economy through strong regional economies. Internal capacity to carry out research projects and provide economic and statistical analysis has been supplemented by a more substantial and focussed menu of external policy activities and partnerships. This has been accomplished by means of research studies carried out by external partners, and by an ongoing series of Roundtables organized by partners and involving stakeholders from throughout the region.

The central research focus has been regional competitiveness. Five studies compared Atlantic Canada's competitiveness and growth potential with jurisdictions in the United States, Europe and the rest of Canada. The key objectives of this exercise were to:

- show Atlantic Canada in a North American and global perspective, using internationally recognized standards of measurement;
- demonstrate that Atlantic Canada has a real basis for competitiveness and growth, particularly vis-à-vis the United States;
- identify the region's strengths as a basis for promoting opportunity and attracting investment;
- identify specific areas of weakness requiring policy and program initiatives; and
- respond to the myth that Atlantic Canada is not a competitive location for investments.

The five research studies published under this program were:

1. a comparison of location-sensitive investment costs in Atlantic Canada, which showed that 16 communities in the region had an overall cost advantage of 7% (after tax) when compared with 12 locations in the United States;
2. a Human Development Index that compared the socio-economic status of Atlantic Canada with the rest of the G7 countries, and which showed that despite several competitiveness challenges, the region ranks second only to the Canadian average;
3. a competitiveness ranking of Atlantic Canada and the 50 states, which put the region about on a par with its New England neighbours;
4. a similar competitiveness ranking, but this time comparing the region with 48 economies throughout the world; and which put Atlantic Canada roughly half-way in the pack in terms of competitiveness; and
5. an expanded version of the first study that compared location-sensitive costs in four cities in Atlantic Canada with 23 other North American locations and 15 cities in Europe. Canada was first of the seven countries ranked, and Atlantic Canada's four representative cities were first through fourth of the 42 cities compared.

The Roundtable Series was designed to develop research topics and economic intelligence in collaboration with partners in the Atlantic community. It began in 1995 with the objective of creating a forum through which the Agency can engage leading academics, private and public sector policy experts, business associations and individual entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders in the economy on selected issues which are important to regional economic development. For each Roundtable, an external partner organized and hosted the event, contributed to the preparation of discussion papers, and prepared a report on the proceedings. Eight Roundtables have been held in the series to date:

- Issues in Community Economic Development, St. Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia;
- The Role of Universities in Economic Development, Memorial University of Newfoundland;
- Demographic Changes, Implications and Opportunities, University of New Brunswick;
- Academia and Industry Working Together in Aquaculture, Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island;

"... it is increasingly important for Atlantic Canadians to collectively understand their circumstances and to fashion an agenda for the region's future. The Roundtable series has certainly provided an excellent vehicle to serve this purpose in a most concrete and rational manner"

*Eric Ellsworth, Past Chair,
Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce*

- Entrepreneurship, Saint Mary's University, Nova Scotia;
- Regional Competitiveness, Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce, Moncton;
- Francophone Roundtable on Economic Development in Atlantic Canada Rural and Coastal Regions, Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick Inc, Bathurst; and
- The Role of the Third Sector and the Social Economy in Regional Development in Atlantic Canada, Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Performance Measurement and Evaluation

In 1996-97, the Agency's economic policy studies reached approximately 5,000 individuals and organizations, including Canada's foreign posts. While development of specific measures of the impact of policy research will be the subject of future evaluation work, there is evidence of the benefit of research completed to date. For example, the findings from the competitiveness benchmarking studies, such as the KPMG investment location cost reports, have been used or referred to by various external partners, including the provinces, in conjunction with investment promotion and attraction activities. Studies which have been sectorially focussed, such as one examining opportunities for biotechnology-based business in the region, have been used by firms and sector organizations alike in the development of strategic plans. Finally, the entire body of research has been an important tool in providing information for corporate program and policy development, supporting advocacy efforts, and better understanding the challenges and opportunities facing the regional economy. The Roundtable Series has engaged more than 275 external partners directly in discussion and debate around issues of importance to the regional economy. Feedback from participants confirms the value of this mechanism in engaging external partners in the policy process.

Section III: Overall Impact

Chapter 11

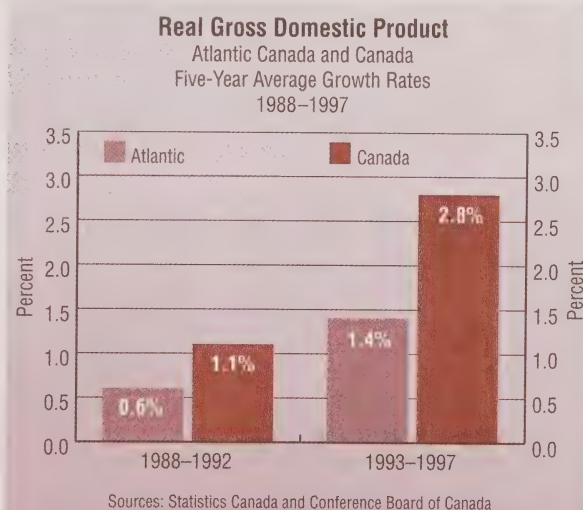
Atlantic Economic Growth and ACOA's Impact

The development of the Atlantic economy has been influenced by several key factors, including seasonal industries (mostly resource-based), a large service sector, and a narrow manufacturing base. These have contributed to slow population growth, few large urban centres, and a significant number of widely dispersed communities. These factors underline a continuing pattern in which the region's economy has lagged somewhat behind that of the rest of Canada and has had lower levels of employment and incomes.

The five-year period from 1993 to 1997 was one of adjustment for the Atlantic economy, brought about by new global and fiscal realities. The region was not only adapting to increased international competitive pressures but also to domestic restructuring. Over the five years, as well, groundfish stocks collapsed, and a number of major construction projects (Hibernia, the Fixed Link) began and then wound down. Another project, the Canadian Frigate Program came to an end. At the same time, commodity markets fluctuated widely, but generally have been slow to recover from the recession of the early 1990s. As governments wrestled with budget deficits, the region's economic performance was also hampered by spending cuts.

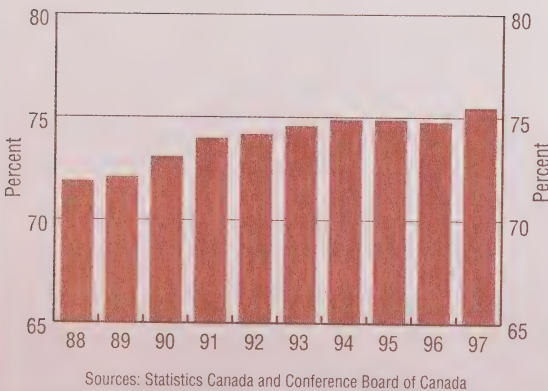
As a result, the recovery from the recession of the early 1990s was much slower in Atlantic Canada than in the rest of the country. Growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in real terms averaged 1.4% each year from 1993 to 1997, compared with 2.8% for Canada.

Employment growth was also weak in the region, with job gains averaging 0.9% from 1993 to 1997, compared to 1.6% for Canada. The unemployment rate averaged 14.3% over the five years; while the comparable national rate was 10%. Uncertain labour markets translated into low levels of consumer confidence, and fostered weak population growth (0.2% a year compared with 1.2% a year for Canada).



Earned Income

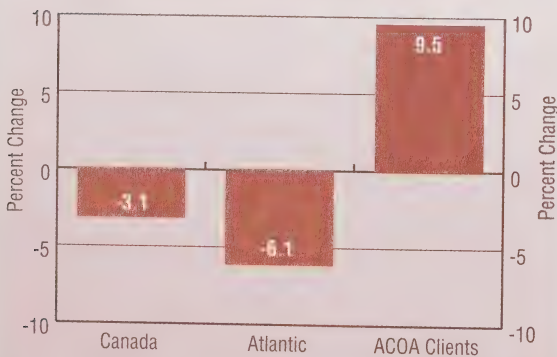
Atlantic Canada 1988-1997
(per capita as a percent of Canada)



There were some bright spots in the Atlantic economy. Information technology and tourism both expanded strongly. A dynamic small business sector and continued diversification of the economy enabled the labour force participation rate to remain stable, and the overall employment rate (a measure of an economy's ability to provide employment for its people) increased from 49.9% to 50.5% over the five years. Earned income per capita in the region improved from 74.2% of the national average in 1992 to 75.5% in 1997.

Given the weak economic environment described above and the fact that total ACOA funds used to promote new wealth and opportunity have accounted for approximately 2% of all federal expenditures in the region over the 1993-97 period, aggregate economic trends are not reliable indicators of the effectiveness of Agency spending per se. The bulk of federal spending in the region is in the form of transfers to people and to provincial governments, like employment insurance, Canada Health and Social Transfer and equalization payments.

Business Employment Change 1989-1995



Source: Statistics Canada, Employment Dynamics

Total ACOA spending, with an average of just over \$400 million a year from 1993-94 to 1997-98, was small, representing less than 1% of the value of the Atlantic GDP. As a result, the positive impacts of ACOA spending have been overshadowed by adjustment and restructuring in major sectors, such as the groundfishery.

These overall trends are reflected in employment changes. While employment in ACOA-assisted businesses increased by 9.5% over the 1989-95 period, total business employment in Atlantic Canada dropped by 6%.

To determine the overall results achieved by Agency programming, ACOA has commissioned independent program evaluations, client surveys and economic impact analysis. Results have been reported in the Agency's 1996 and 1997 Performance Reports to Parliament. The ACOA approach to reporting results also found important support elsewhere:

The best examples were found in reports that explained methodology and provided precise references to authorities... ACOA carefully explained its approach, made detailed reference to outside evaluations, third-party collection (Statistics Canada survey), and analysis (Conference Board econometric model), as well as an independent review.

*Evaluation Report, Improved Reporting to Parliament Project
Performance Reports. A Report of the Parliamentary Working Group,
Ron Duhamel, M.P., Chair, December 1996*

Chapter 12

Employment Impact

ACOA has identified and used a range of indicators to evaluate and monitor its performance. Employment and earned income have always been key indicators, explicit in the Agency's mandate. Employment in particular has been reported regularly, and methods to estimate its impact have been continuously refined to gain a better measure of ACOA's contributions to the Atlantic economy.

These indicators have been joined by new measures, to better reflect ACOA's approach to economic development. These attempt to measure, for example, some of the steps that Atlantic businesses must take to ensure long-term development, like investments in innovation, in skills development, in learning more about international markets, and in improving management practices. While increased employment opportunities and earned income represent the ultimate mandate and goal of the Agency, additional corporate measures include the start-up and survival rates of new businesses, new exporters, value of exported goods and services, and improved productivity in Atlantic business. A number of these indicators have been reported in Chapter Four on Small Business Development. The remainder of this section deals with the impact of ACOA programs on the ultimate outcomes of ACOA policy, employment and earned income.

Figure 5 provides an overall estimate of employment generated over the last five years and includes estimates of all ACOA programs. For commercial projects, actual employment generated by completed projects was determined by independent survey.²⁵ Reported jobs from the Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs), under the CBED service line have been verified.²⁶

In 1996, a review of ACOA's research methodology and job measurement was done by external consultants to address questions of reliability and credibility of reported impact. The review concluded that the Agency's assumptions and calculations were reasonable and, in some cases, conservative.²⁷ Its revisions to the Agency's evaluation produced an employment impact about 10% higher than the one reported by ACOA.

²⁵ Statistics Canada - Survey of Atlantic Canada Small- and Medium-Sized Business, 1995 and 1997.

²⁶ The Agency did a verification of jobs reported by the CBDCs in 1998. Actual jobs created were 11% higher than projected while reported jobs maintained were 26% higher. The projected job estimates are used in Figure 5 in the interest of producing conservative estimates.

²⁷ Coopers & Lybrand Consulting, Impact of ACOA Programs on Job Creation, January 1997.

Figure 5 - ACOA Programs
Incremental Gross Employment Impact

a) By Service Line		b) By Fiscal Year	
	Total since 1993		Total since Inception
Business Development, Action, FAP	43,800	Reported in the first Five Year Report	42,000
COOPERATION	8,000	1993-94	12,200
Community-Based Economic Development (CBED)	7,300	1994-95	18,000
Advocacy & Coordination	1,800	1995-96	9,800
Adjustment	800	1996-97	10,500
		1997-98	14,000
Canada Infrastructure Works Program			
In long-term equivalent	2,800		

Source: Action Program Evaluation Summary Report, Price Waterhouse 1992, The Evaluation of the ACOA COOPERATION Program, Coopers and Lybrand, 1994, and ACOA calculations based on internal program data adjusted by results of client surveys undertaken by Statistics Canada.

It is important to note several features of these estimates. First, only jobs associated with incremental projects are included.²⁸ Second, the figure includes indirect and induced employment resulting from the spending of assisted companies and their employees. These impacts have been estimated using the Conference Board of Canada's model of the Atlantic economy.

²⁸ The Auditor General, in his report dated November 1995, Chapter 18, defines an incremental project as one which would likely "not have proceeded with the same scope, at the same time and in the same location without government assistance." Based on independently conducted surveys of clients and its own internal follow-up of businesses, the Agency has estimated an incrementality factor of .67, meaning that for every 100 jobs generated by assisted projects, only 67 are actually reported. The Auditor General's 1995 comprehensive audit of ACOA assessed a much higher factor of .81.

Chapter 13

Overall Economic Impact

The jobs created and maintained through ACOA support under the Business Development, Action and Fisheries Alternatives programs, and the COOPERATION and CBED service lines, can be expressed as a total impact on the Atlantic economy. To do this, the jobs are translated into a measure of "value-added" economic impact, sector by sector. Value-added impact by sector is entered in the Conference Board's model to estimate the impact on regional earned income as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP).²⁹ In this manner, other macro-economic effects, in particular the impact on taxes, can also be estimated.

It is important to note several features of this estimate:

1. Jobs maintained include only those jobs which clients indicated in the Statistics Canada survey as "highly likely to have been lost" without support. This was about 30% of total reported jobs maintained.
2. The job and economic impacts are those that result only from successful projects. However, the ACOA expenditures include investment in all projects, including failed ones.
3. Only the benefits of incremental projects, as calculated on the basis of independent client survey results, are included (see footnote on previous page for definition of incrementality). Using an estimate of 0.67 as an incrementality factor, for example, only 67 of 100 jobs reported from a project are included in ACOA's final count.
4. Benefits include direct employment gains by ACOA-assisted businesses, plus indirect and induced employment as estimated by the Conference Board's model. Indirect and induced impacts occur as incomes associated with direct employment gains are spent and respent throughout the economy. This impact, commonly known as the "multiplier", is calculated to be approximately 0.4, meaning that four jobs are created through these indirect and induced impacts for every ten jobs created directly by ACOA expenditures.
5. The impact on GDP is net of the impact which would have been obtained if the ACOA expenditures had been directed instead to providing income support (for example via Employment Insurance or social assistance) to individuals. In the absence of ACOA expenditures to support productive investment and long-term employment, a most likely use of equivalent federal spending would have been this type of cash transfer to individuals.

²⁹ The Impact of the ACOA COOPERATION Program on the Atlantic Economy, ARC Consultants Inc., June 1998 and analysis by ACOA.

While the underlying surveys and evaluations include any projects that had failed at the time of the surveys, it is recognized that some companies will fail subsequent to completion of the ACOA involvement with them. To the extent that firms assisted in earlier years fail, there will be a reduction in overall economic impact in the 1993-98 period. The average age of a completed project is about three years. Available data on the survival rate of ACOA-assisted firms from Statistics Canada,³⁰ indicates that a further 8% of firms fail between three and five years of age. To recognize the impact of projects failing after completion, the overall impacts have been reduced by 10% to reflect failure rates between three and ten years, since the survival rate of businesses after five years is relatively stable.³¹ This assumption is believed to be conservative because it takes no account of the fact that some projects will do better than expected and offset failed projects.

It is also possible to make an allowance for what is called the “displacement” effect, i.e., ACOA support to firms adversely affecting competitors. The little evidence available indicates that this effect is weak. For example, the Economic Council of Canada found that if there is an effect, it is not very strong or occurs by inhibiting expansions.³² More recent evidence from the United Kingdom indicates a displacement effect of between six and 29%.³³

The Agency has procedures in place to ensure that adverse impact on competitors is kept at a minimum consistent with achieving the objective of improved competitiveness. It is true, however, that the Auditor General did find some instances where existing producers could have been affected by Agency support. Accordingly, for the purposes of ensuring conservation in reporting results, a displacement effect of 15% has been assumed for ACOA-supported projects.

These procedures all support ACOA's determination to report the results of its work fairly. Incorporating all assumed effects—incrementality factor (0.67), failure rate after three years have passed (0.10), and displacement factor (0.15) – means that, of a theoretical 100 jobs reported as resulting from an ACOA-assisted project, only about 51 are reported here, i.e., $100 \times (0.67 \times 0.9 \times 0.85)$.

³⁰ Statistics Canada, *Employment Dynamics*.

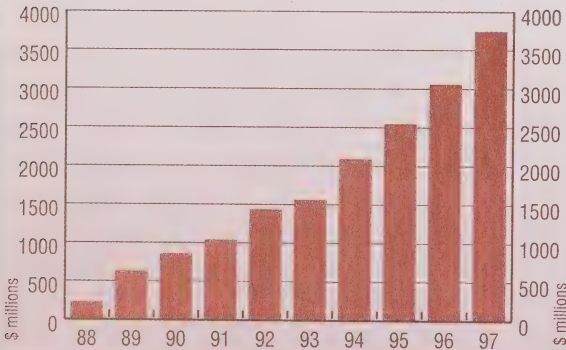
³¹ Statistics Canada *Small Business and Special Survey, 1979-88*.

³² Economic Council of Canada, *Living Together, A Study of Regional Disparities, 1977*.

³³ National Audit Office, *Creating and Safeguarding Jobs in Wales*, a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, 1991.

Impact on Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Total Increase in GDP (\$ 1986)
ACOA Programming



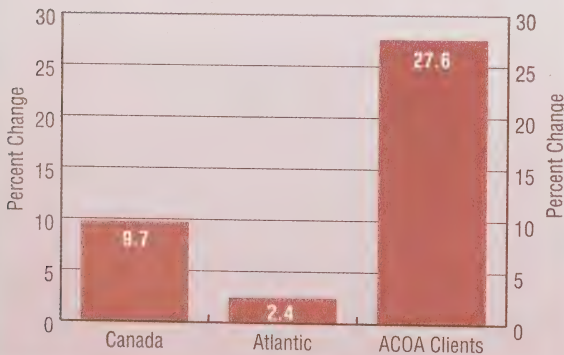
Impact on Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

In its first Five-Year Report, the Agency noted that by 1992, after five years of operation, Atlantic GDP was \$1.4 billion higher annually in constant 1986 dollars than it would have been if equivalent sums had been spent on employment insurance. From 1992 to 1997 this annual GDP impact has grown to \$3.7 billion.

This results from the extra economic activity emanating from Agency programming from 1992 to 1997, plus the long-term impact from businesses supported from 1987 to 1992.

Employment in businesses supported by Agency programming continues long after the front-end government support for product and market development.

Change in Payroll 1989-1995 Manufacturing Sector



Over the 10-year period, the Business Development, Community-Based Economic Development and COOPERATION Programs have produced approximately \$5 in GDP for every \$1 of expenditure.

Further evidence of the contribution of Agency programming to regional income comes from Statistics Canada data on the growth of wages and salaries in ACOA-assisted manufacturing firms. Payrolls increased by 28% for ACOA-assisted manufacturing firms from 1989 to 1995 compared with just over 2% for all Atlantic manufacturers, and 10% for Canadian manufacturers.

Returns to the Taxpayer

ACOA contributions to businesses are repayable. On top of this, it is important to consider the returns to the taxpayer in the form of taxes paid by assisted businesses and their employees.

Included here are personal income taxes on wages earned by employees and sales taxes on purchases made by companies and their employees. Note that these tax revenues do not include corporate income taxes which, for technical reasons, cannot be calculated by the Conference Board model. In the interest of producing conservative estimates, possible savings to the government in employment insurance payments because of the additional employment created by assisted projects have not been considered.

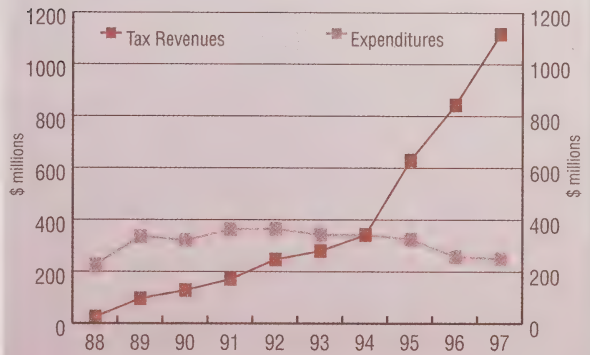
Over the ten years from 1988 to 1997, ACOA program expenditures of \$3.2 billion have produced tax revenues of \$3.9 billion.

Impact on the Unemployment Rate

In its first Five-Year Report, ACOA reported that the regional unemployment rate in 1992 was 1 percentage point lower than it would have been without ACOA programming. In 1997, it is estimated that the regional unemployment rate is 2.8 percentage points lower than it would have been without ACOA programming.

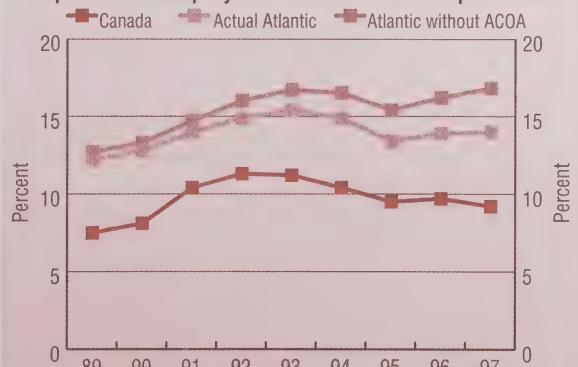
The firm PricewaterhouseCoopers has reviewed the process and assumptions underlying ACOA's estimates of economic impact. They conclude that the Agency's estimate of the impact of its programming on the unemployment rate is reasonable and likely conservative.³⁴

Tax Revenues Resulting from ACOA Expenditures*



* Expenditures are the sum of spending on Business Development Program, Community-Based Economic Development, COOPERATION Program and Transfers to OGDs for Cooperation (Figure 3, Chapter 2).

Impact on Unemployment Rate — ACOA Expenditures



Sources: Statistics Canada and ACOA Estimates

³⁴ PricewaterhouseCoopers, Review of Assumptions and Process of ACOA Job Creation and Unemployment Rate Estimates, September 1998

Conclusion

The Speech from the Throne that opened the First Session of Canada's 36th Parliament in late 1997 touched on many themes and topics that would engage Canadians and their elected representatives as the new millennium approaches, including:

- Helping small- and medium-sized business develop and commercialize new technology;
- Supporting science, technology, and the creation of knowledge;
- Connecting Canadians to the information highway;
- Governments working together in partnership;
- Increasing opportunities for Canadians in rural communities;
- Expanding Canada's trade base;
- Expanding opportunities in Aboriginal communities; and
- Opportunities for youth.

They are all areas where ACOA has been involved, in pursuit of its mandate of expanding the Atlantic economy, reflecting ACOA's wide experience in many of the areas being targeted by the Government of Canada to create jobs and stimulate growth.

The way that the Agency has tackled these challenges has involved a constant evolution of programs, operations, and roles. Specifically, ACOA's main programs of support have become, at the same time, both simpler and better tailored to specific communities or local needs.

ACOA has increased its emphasis on partnerships with other agencies and departments of government, with communities, and with the private sector as efficient ways to pursue Atlantic economic development. The results of these joint efforts have been detailed throughout this report, employing independent evaluations and conservative methods of estimation. And the results—such as the fact that the regional unemployment rate in 1997 was 2.8% lower than it would have been without ACOA—clearly demonstrate that this decentralized partnership approach to regional development is working.

Of equal importance, the report has demonstrated through the use of specific examples, that Atlantic Canadians are increasingly shouldering responsibility for the economic development of their region. However, many of the gains achieved by ACOA and its partners have been overshadowed by industrial restructuring and job losses in the public and private sectors. As a result, much work remains to be done with partners if Atlantic Canada is to develop and sustain a strong regional economy supporting a strong Canadian economy. This will require greater commitment to regional development on the part of partners in Atlantic development in all levels of government and the private sector.

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Conclusion

Le Discours du Trône qui a ouvert la première session de la trente-sixième législature, à la fin de 1997, touchait de nombreux thèmes et sujets qui allaient engager les Canadiennes, les Canadiens et les élus politiques à la veille du prochain millénaire, notamment :

- Aider les petites et moyennes entreprises à développer et à commercialiser de nouvelles technologies;
- Soutenir la science, la technologie et l'acquisition du savoir;
- Relier les Canadiennes et les Canadiens à l'autoroute électronique;
- Établir des partenariats entre les gouvernements;
- Accroître les possibilités dans les collectivités rurales;
- Élargir la base de l'activité commerciale du Canada;
- Accroître les possibilités dans les collectivités autochtones;
- Créer des possibilités pour les jeunes

Tous ces thèmes touchent des secteurs auxquels l'APÉCA a participé dans l'exécution de son mandat visant à développer l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique, et reflètent la vaste expérience que possède l'Agence dans bon nombre des domaines aujourd'hui ciblés par le gouvernement du Canada pour stimuler l'emploi et la croissance.

Afin de relever ces défis, l'Agence a notamment assuré l'évolution constante de ses programmes, de ses activités et de ses rôles. Plus particulièrement, les principaux programmes de soutien de l'APÉCA sont devenus en même temps plus simples et mieux adaptés à des collectivités ou à des besoins locaux particuliers.

L'APÉCA mise davantage sur les partenariats avec d'autres ministères et organismes gouvernementaux, les collectivités et le secteur privé comme moyens efficaces de poursuivre le développement économique de la région de l'Atlantique. Tout au long du présent rapport, nous avons expliqué en détails les résultats de ces efforts conjoints en nous appuyant sur des évaluations indépendantes et des méthodes d'évaluation prudentes. Ces résultats — par exemple, le fait que le taux de chômage en 1997 était de 2,8 points de pourcentage plus bas qu'il ne l'aurait été sans l'APÉCA — montrent clairement que cette approche de partenariat décentralisé au développement régional est efficace.

Le rapport a également montré, à l'aide d'exemples précis, que les habitants de la région de l'Atlantique assument une part croissante de responsabilité à l'égard du développement économique de leur région. Toutefois, nombre de gains réalisés par l'APÉCA et ses partenaires sont moins manifestes à cause de la restructuration de l'industrie et de la perte d'emplois dans les secteurs public et privé. Il reste donc beaucoup à faire en collaboration avec les partenaires pour développer et soutenir dans la région de l'Atlantique une économie forte qui contribue à la force de l'économie du Canada. Il faudra pouvoir compter sur un engagement accru à l'égard du développement économique régional de la part de tous les ordres d'administration publique et des autres partenaires du secteur privé dans la région de l'Atlantique.

Rendement pour le contribuable

Les contributions que l'APECA verse aux entreprises sont remboursables. Par ailleurs, il est important de prendre en considération le rendement pour le contribuable sous formes de taxes et d'impôts versés par les entreprises soutenues et par leurs employés.

L'impôt sur le revenu des employés et les taxes de vente sur les achats effectués par les compagnies et leurs employés sont inclus dans ce calcul.

Notons que les recettes fiscales n'incluent pas l'impôt sur les sociétés qui, pour des raisons techniques, ne peut être calculé par le modèle du Conference Board. Afin de produire des estimations prudentes, on n'a pas pris en considération les économies qu'il aurait pu réaliser le gouvernement en versements d'assurance-emploi grâce aux emplois additionnels créés par le soutien aux projets.

Au cours des dix années qui se sont écoulées de 1988 à 1997, les dépenses de programme de 3,2 milliards de dollars faites par l'APECA ont engendré des recettes fiscales de 3,9 milliards de dollars.

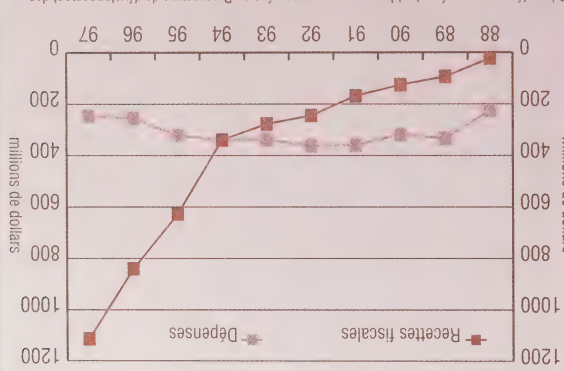
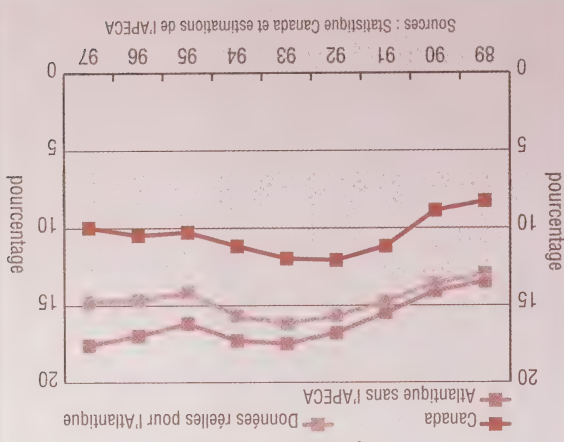
Répérations sur le taux de chômage

Dans son premier rapport quinquennal, l'APECA déclarait que le taux de chômage dans la région en 1992 était de 1 point de pourcentage inférieur à ce qu'il aurait été sans ses programmes. En 1997, on estime que le taux de chômage régional était de 2,8 points de pourcentage inférieur à ce qu'il aurait été sans les programmes de l'APECA.

Une vérification effectuée par la PricewaterhouseCoopers conclut que la méthode de calcul et les prémisses utilisées par l'Agence dans son estimation des répercussions économiques, dont l'impact sur le taux de chômage, sont raisonnables et probablement prudentes.²⁴

²⁴ PricewaterhouseCoopers, Review of Assumptions and Process of ACOA Job Creation and Unemployment Rate Estimates, Septembre 1998.

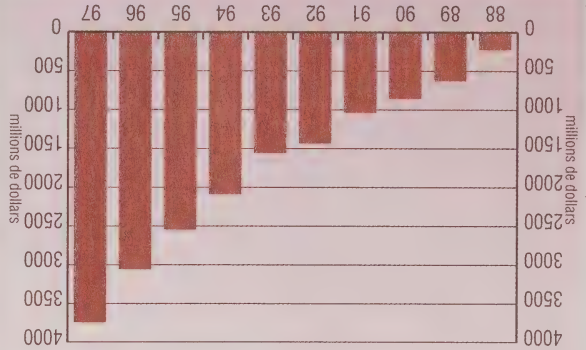
Répérations sur le taux de chômage - Dépenses de l'APECA



* Les dépenses représentent les sommes consacrées au Programme de développement des entreprises, au programme Développement économique des collectivités, au Programme de COOPÉRATION et aux transferts aux AMG à des fins de coopération (Figure 3, chapitre 2).

Répercussions sur le produit intérieur brut (PIB)

Répercussions sur le produit intérieur brut (PIB)
Augmentation totale du PIB (\$ de 1986)
Programmes de l'APECA



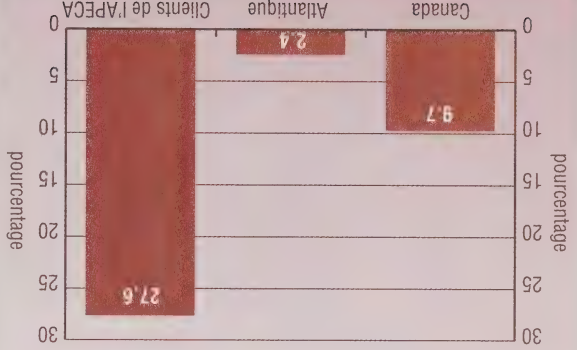
Dans son premier rapport quinquennal, l'Agence avait noté qu'en 1992, soit cinq ans après la création de l'Agence, le PIB du Canada atlantique était de 1,4 milliard de dollars plus élevé en dollars constants de 1986 que ce qu'il aurait été si les montants équivalents avaient été dépensés en assurance-emploi. De 1992 à 1997, ces répercussions annuelles sur le PIB sont passées à 3,7 milliards de dollars. Cet état de choses découle de l'activité économique additionnelle engendrée par les programmes de l'Agence entre 1992 et 1997, en plus des retombées à long terme des entreprises soutenues de 1987 à 1992. Les emplois créés dans les entreprises soutenues par les programmes de l'Agence sont maintenus longtemps après la contribution initiale du gouvernement pour le développement des produits et des marchés.

Au cours de la période de dix ans, les programmes de Développement économique des collectivités et de COOPÉRATION ont généré environ cinq dollars en PIB pour chaque dollar dépensé.

Les données de Statistique Canada sur la croissance des salaires dans les entreprises manufacturières soutenues par l'APECA

fournissent d'autres indications de l'apport des programmes de l'Agence au revenu régional. De 1989 à 1995, la masse salariale a augmenté de 28 p. 100 dans ces entreprises, comparativement à un peu plus de 2 p. 100 pour l'ensemble des fabricants de l'Atlantique et à 10 p. 100 pour les fabricants canadiens.

Évolution de la masse salariale de 1989 à 1995
Secteur manufacturier



Bien que les évaluations et sondages sous-jacents tiennent compte de tous les projets qui avaient échoué au moment desdits sondages, on admet que certaines compagnies feront faillite une fois que l'APÉCA aura cessé de les aider. Les retombées économiques globales au cours de la période 1993-1998 seront moins grandes dans la mesure où des entreprises soutenues dans les années antérieures auront cessé leurs activités. La durée moyenne d'un projet mené à terme est d'environ trois ans. Selon les données de Statistique Canada sur le taux de survie des entreprises aidées par l'APÉCA, une proportion additionnelle de 8 p. 100 des entreprises échouent trois à cinq ans après leur démarrage.³⁰ Pour tenir compte de l'incidence des projets qui échouent une fois menés à terme, les évaluateurs ont réduit de 10 p. 100 les retombées globales pour refléter les échecs qui surviennent entre trois et dix ans, étant donné que le taux de survie des entreprises après cinq ans est relativement stable.³¹ Cette hypothèse est considérée comme prudente parce qu'elle ne prend pas en considération le fait que certains projets produiront de meilleurs résultats que prévu pour contrebalancer les projets qui ont échoué.

Il est également possible de tenir compte de ce qu'on appelle l'effet de déplacement (quand le soutien de l'APÉCA à des entreprises nuit aux concurrents). D'après le peu de données dont on dispose, cet effet est faible. À titre d'exemple, le Conseil économique du Canada a conclu que s'il y a un effet, celui-ci n'est pas très prononcé ou il s'observe sous forme d'entraves à l'agrandissement.³² Des indicateurs plus récents du Royaume-Uni font état d'un effet de déplacement se situant entre six et 29 p. 100.³³

L'Agence applique des procédures pour s'assurer qu'on nuise le moins possible aux concurrents, tout en poursuivant l'objectif de capacité concurrentielle accrue. Toutefois, le vérificateur général a constaté quelques cas où les producteurs existants auraient pu souffrir du soutien accordé par l'Agence. Donc, par souci de prudence, on présume un effet de déplacement égal à 15 p. 100 de l'emploi total dans le cas des projets soutenus par l'APÉCA.

Toutes ces procédures appuient la détermination de l'APÉCA à déclarer les résultats de son travail en toute probité. Le fait d'intégrer tous les effets présusés (facteur d'accroissement [0,67], taux d'échec après trois ans [0,10] et facteur de déplacement [0,15]) signifie que, sur un total théorique de 100 emplois déclarés comme découlant d'un projet soutenu par l'APÉCA, seulement 51 de ces emplois, environ, sont déclarés ici ($100 \times (0,67 \times 0,9 \times 0,85)$).

³⁰ Statistique Canada, *Dynamique de l'emploi*.

³¹ Statistique Canada, *Small Business and Special Survey, 1979-1988*.

³² Economic Council of Canada, *Living Together, A Study of Regional Disparities, 1977*.

³³ National Audit Office, *Creating and Safeguarding Jobs in Wales, a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, 1991*.

Chapitre 13

Retombées économiques générales

Il est possible de définir l'impact global sur l'économie de l'Atlantique à partir des emplois créés et préservés par l'APÉCA dans le cadre des programmes de Développement des entreprises, Action et Diversi-pêches, de même que par la gamme de services de COOPÉRATION et du DEC. Pour ce faire, on transpose les emplois en instrument de mesure de l'activité économique, à savoir la « valeur ajoutée », par secteur. La valeur ajoutée par secteur est utilisée dans le modèle du Conference Board afin d'en évaluer l'incidence sur le revenu régional gagné tel que mesuré par le produit intérieur brut (PIB).²⁸ De cette façon, on peut également évaluer d'autres retombées macroéconomiques, plus particulièrement les répercussions sur les impôts.

Il importe de mentionner plusieurs caractéristiques de cette estimation :

1. Les emplois préservés n'incluent que ceux qui auraient "très probablement" disparus en l'absence d'aide, de l'avis des clients interrogés lors de l'enquête de Statistiques Canada. Ainsi, seulement 30 p. 100 des emplois préservés ont été retenus dans ce calcul.
2. Les répercussions sur l'emploi et sur les facteurs économiques connexes sont celles qui découlent des projets fructueux seulement. Toutefois, les dépenses comprennent les sommes investies dans tous les projets, y compris ceux qui ont échoué.
3. Seuls sont inclus les avantages des projets soutenus, tels que calculés selon les résultats de l'enquête indépendante auprès des clients (voir la note en bas de page sur la page précédente où est défini le facteur d'accroissement). À titre d'exemple, une estimation de 0,67 comme facteur d'accroissement signifie que lorsque 100 emplois sont rapportés par les clients, seulement 67 sont inclus dans le compte final de l'APÉCA.

4. Les retombées comprennent la création d'emplois directs dans les entreprises soutenues par l'APÉCA, plus les emplois indirects et induits selon les évaluations utilisées dans le modèle du Conference Board. Les retombées indirectes et induites surviennent lorsque les revenus liés à la création d'emplois directs sont plusieurs fois dépensés dans l'ensemble de l'économie. On estime que ces retombées, communément définies comme l'effet multiplicateur, ont une proportion approximative de 0,4, ce qui signifie que quatre emplois sont créés par l'intermédiaire des retombées indirectes et induites pour chaque tranche de dix emplois directement créés grâce aux sommes versées par l'APÉCA.

5. On a déduit des répercussions engendrées sur le PIB les retombées qui auraient été obtenues si les fonds de l'APÉCA avaient été affectés au soutien du revenu (par exemple, par l'intermédiaire de l'assurance-emploi ou de l'aide sociale). En l'absence d'une aide de l'APÉCA pour l'investissement productif et la création d'emplois à long terme, on aurait fort probablement dépensé un montant équivalent sous forme de transferts de fonds fédéraux aux particuliers.

Figure 5 - Programmes de l'APECA
Répercussions marginales brutes sur l'emploi

a) Par gamme de services	
Total depuis 1993	43,800
Développement des entreprises, Action, PDP	8,000
COOPÉRATION	7,300
Développement économique des collectivités (DEC)	1,800
Défense des intérêts et coordination	800
Adaptation	2,800
Programme des travaux d'infrastructure du Canada, en équivalent à long terme	
b) Par exercice	
Total depuis l'entrée en vigueur	42,000
Déclarations dans le premier rapport quinquennal	1993-1994
	1994-1995
	1995-1996
	1996-1997
	1997-1998

Source: Sommaire de l'évaluation du programme Action, Price Waterhouse, 1992; Évaluation du programme de COOPÉRATION, Coopers and Lybrand, 1994; et calculs fondés sur des données internes des programmes rajustées selon les résultats des sondages de Statistiques Canada auprès des clients.

Il importe de préciser plusieurs des caractéristiques de ces estimations. Premièrement, seuls les emplois associés aux projets qui nécessitaient une aide ont été inclus.²⁸ Deuxièmement, les chiffres comprennent les emplois indirects et induits découlant des dépenses des compagnies ayant reçu de l'aide et de leurs employés. On a évalué ces retombées au moyen du modèle économique pour la région de l'Atlantique établi par le Conference Board du Canada.

²⁸ Au chapitre 18 de son rapport de novembre 1995, le vérificateur général définit un projet qui a besoin d'aide comme un projet qui ne serait probablement pas mis en oeuvre à la même échelle, au même moment et au même endroit sans aide gouvernementale. Selon des sondages indépendants menés auprès des clients et son propre suivi interne des entreprises, l'Agence a évalué un facteur d'accroissement de 0,67. Ceci signifie que seulement 67 sur 100 emplois déclarés par les clients seront inclus dans le compte final. La méthode est considérée comme réaliste, sinon prudente. Le rapport du vérificateur général a évalué un facteur beaucoup plus élevé, soit 0,81, dans son évaluation de l'APECA de novembre 1995.

Chapitre 12

Répercussions sur l'emploi

L'APÉCA a défini et utilisé un éventail d'indicateurs pour évaluer et contrôler son rendement. L'emploi et le revenu gagné ont toujours été des indicateurs clés, tel qu'indiqué explicitement dans le mandat de l'Agence. De façon plus particulière, l'emploi a été rapporté périodiquement et on n'a cessé de perfectionner les méthodes d'évaluation de son incidence afin d'obtenir une meilleure mesure des contributions de l'APÉCA à l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique.

À ces indicateurs s'ajoutent de nouvelles mesures qui visent à mieux refléter l'approche de l'APÉCA à l'égard du développement économique. On tente ainsi de mesurer, par exemple, certaines des étapes que doivent suivre les entreprises de l'Atlantique pour assurer un développement à long terme, comme des investissements dans l'innovation, dans l'acquisition de compétences, dans l'élargissement des connaissances sur les marchés internationaux de même que dans l'amélioration des pratiques de gestion. Si l'accroissement des perspectives d'emploi et du revenu gagné constitue le mandat et l'objectif ultimes de l'Agence, celle-ci utilise également d'autres mesures comme le démarrage et le taux de survie des nouvelles entreprises, les nouveaux exportateurs, la valeur des produits et services importés et la productivité des entreprises de l'Atlantique. Certains de ces indicateurs ont été mentionnés au chapitre quatre sur le développement des petites entreprises. Le reste de la présente section décrit l'incidence des programmes de l'APÉCA sur les résultats finals de la politique de l'APÉCA, sur l'emploi et sur le revenu gagné.

La figure 5 donne une estimation globale de l'emploi engendré au cours des cinq dernières années ainsi que des estimations pour tous les programmes de l'APÉCA. En ce qui a trait aux projets commerciaux, une étude indépendante a permis de déterminer l'emploi réel découlant des projets réalisés.²² L'Agence a vérifié les emplois déclarés par les Corporations locales de développement économiques (CLDE) suivant la gamme de services de DEBC.²³

En 1996, des experts-conseils de l'extérieur ont examiné la méthodologie de recherche et des mesures d'emploi de l'APÉCA afin de déterminer la fiabilité et la crédibilité des répercussions induites. Au terme de l'examen, on a conclu que les hypothèses et les calculs de l'APÉCA étaient raisonnables et, dans certains cas, prudents.²⁷ La révision de l'évaluation de l'Agence concernant les répercussions sur l'emploi a produit des données de 10 p. 100 supérieures à celles déclarées par l'Agence.

²² Statistique Canada - Enquêtes auprès des petites et moyennes entreprises du Canada atlantique, 1995 et 1997. L'Agence a vérifié les emplois déclarés par les CLDE en 1998. Le nombre d'emplois effectivement créés était de 11 p. 100 supérieurs aux prévisions, tandis que le nombre d'emplois préservés, selon les déclarations fournies, était de 26 p. 100 supérieur aux données prévisionnelles. Dans la figure 5, on s'est servi des prévisions d'emploi afin de produire des estimations prudentes.

²³ Coopers & Lybrand Consulting, Impact of ACOA Programs on Job Creation, janvier 1997.

Ces tendances globales s'observent dans les changements au chapitre de l'emploi. Bien que les entreprises aidées par l'APÉCA aient connu une hausse de 9,5 p. 100 de l'emploi au cours de la période de 1989 à 1995, les données indiquent une baisse de 6 p. 100 de l'emploi total dans les entreprises du Canada atlantique.

Pour connaître les résultats globaux atteints par ses programmes, l'Agence a demandé à une entreprise indépendante de procéder à une évaluation de ces derniers, à des sondages auprès des clients et à des analyses des répercussions économiques. Les résultats ont été publiés en 1996 et en 1997 dans les rapports sur le rendement de l'Agence fournis au Parlement. L'approche de l'APÉCA dans la présentation des résultats a également obtenu un important soutien extérieur.

Les meilleurs exemples se trouvaient dans les rapports qui expliquaient les méthodes et indiquaient précisément les autorités compétentes. ... L'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique a soigneusement expliqué son approche, fait précisément mention d'évaluations externes, de la collecte de données par des tiers (enquête de Statistique Canada) et de l'analyse (modèle économétrique du Conference Board) ainsi que d'un examen par un organisme indépendant.

Rapport d'évaluation : Projet d'amélioration des Rapports au Parlement - Rapports sur le rendement, Rapport du groupe de travail parlementaire, Ronald Duhamel, député, (Président), Décembre 1996.

L'économie de la région de l'Atlantique a néanmoins comporté certains éléments rassurants. La technologie de l'information et le tourisme ont connu une croissance marquée. Un secteur de la petite entreprise dynamique et une diversification continue de l'économie ont permis au taux d'activité de la population active de demeurer stable, et le taux d'emploi global (une mesure de la capacité de l'économie de fournir de l'emploi à la population) s'est accru pour passer de 49,9 à 50,5 p. 100 pendant la période de cinq ans. Le revenu gagné par habitant dans la région a connu une amélioration, passant de 74,2 p. 100 de la moyenne nationale en 1992, à 75,5 p. 100 en 1997.

Compte tenu de la faiblesse de l'environnement économique décrit ci-dessus et étant donné qu'entre 1993 et 1997, les ressources de

l'APÉCA destinées à promouvoir des richesses et possibilités nouvelles représentaient environ 2,0 p. 100 de l'ensemble des dépenses fédérales dans la région, les tendances

économiques globales ne sont pas, en soi, des indicateurs faibles de l'efficacité de l'APÉCA. La majorité des dépenses fédérales dans la région prend la forme de paiements de transfert aux particuliers et aux gouvernements provinciaux, tels l'assurance-emploi, le Transfert canadien en matière de santé et de programmes sociaux et les paiements de

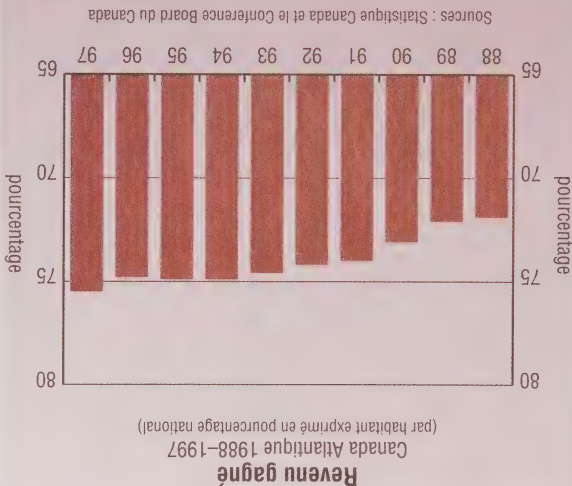
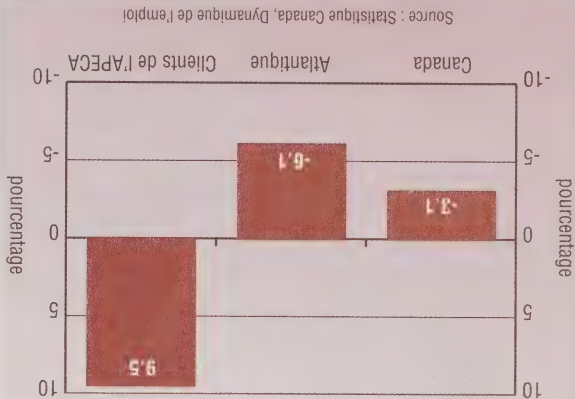
péréquation.

Les dépenses totales de l'APÉCA, dont la moyenne a peine dépassé 400 millions de dollars par année de 1993-1994 à 1997-1998, sont extrêmement faibles puisqu'elles équivalent à moins de 1 p. 100 de la valeur du PIB de la région de l'Atlantique. Par conséquent, les retombées positives des dépenses de l'APÉCA sont moins évidentes en raison des

séquent, les retombées positives des dépenses de l'APÉCA sont moins évidentes en raison des activités d'adaptation et la restructuration dans certains secteurs importants tels que la pêche

du poisson de fond.

Évolution de l'emploi dans les entreprises 1989-1995



Chapitre 11

Croissance économique de la région de l'Atlantique et apport de l'APCA

Le développement de l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique a subi l'influence de plusieurs facteurs clés, notamment des industries saisonnières (essentiellement liées aux ressources naturelles), un vaste secteur tertiaire et une assise manufacturière étroite. Ces facteurs ont contribué à ralentir la croissance démographique, tandis que la population se répartit dans quelques grands centres urbains et de nombreuses collectivités très dispersées. La situation met en relief un schéma continu dans lequel l'économie régionale a pris quelque peu de retard par rapport au reste du Canada et a produit des niveaux d'emplois et de revenus plus faibles.

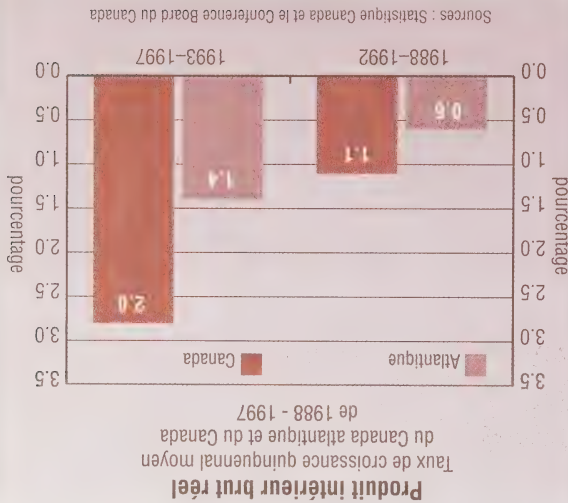
Durant la période de cinq ans qui s'est écoulée de 1993 à 1997, l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique, confrontée aux nouvelles réalités mondiales et financières, a subi des ajustements.

La région s'adaptait non seulement aux pressions concurrentielles accrues sur le plan international, mais également à la restructuration intérieure. Par ailleurs, pendant ces cinq années, les stocks de poissons de fond se sont effondrés, et un certain nombre de grands projets de construction (Hibernia, le Lien fixe) ont été mis en oeuvre, puis ont été achevés. Quant au programme des frégates canadiennes, il a également pris fin. Parallèlement, les marchés de produits primaires ont subi des fluctuations marquées, même s'ils ont généralement été lents à se remettre de la récession du début des années 1990. Les gouvernements, de leur côté, se sont débattus avec le déficit, de sorte que la performance économique de la région a également été entravée par des compressions budgétaires.

Par conséquent, le Canada atlantique a mis plus de temps que le reste du pays à se remettre de la récession du début des années 1990. La

croissance du produit intérieur brut (PIB) en dollars constants a atteint une moyenne annuelle de 1,4 p. 100 de 1993 à 1997, comparativement à 2,8 p. 100 pour le Canada.

La croissance de l'emploi a également été faible dans la région, avec une moyenne de 0,9 p. 100 de 1993 à 1997, comparativement à 1,6 p. 100 pour le Canada. La moyenne du taux de chômage était sur cinq ans s'est établie à 14,3 p. 100, alors qu'elle était de 10 p. 100 à l'échelle nationale. L'incertitude du marché du travail a réduit la confiance du consommateur et peu encouragé la croissance démographique (0,2 p. 100 par année en comparaison de 1,2 p. 100 pour le Canada).



Mesure et évaluation du rendement

- En 1996-1997, les études de l'Agence sur les politiques économiques ont été diffusées à environ 5 000 personnes et organisations, y compris des postes canadiens à l'étranger. Même si l'on s'attachera, dans un prochain travail d'évaluation, à élaborer des outils pertinents pour mesurer les répétitions de la recherche politique, certains éléments nous indiquent déjà les avantages de la recherche effectuée à ce jour. À titre d'exemple, les conclusions d'études comparatives sur la capacité concurrentielle, comme les rapports de KPMG sur les coûts d'investissement selon l'emplacement, ont été utilisées ou mentionnées par divers partenaires externes, notamment les provinces, dans leurs activités de promotion et de recherche d'investissements. Des études axées sur les secteurs, comme celle où l'on examinait les possibilités relatives aux entreprises biotechnologiques dans la région, ont été utilisées par des entreprises et par des organisations sectorielles dans l'élaboration de leurs plans stratégiques. Enfin, tout le contenu de la recherche a constitué un outil important qui a permis de fournir des renseignements sur l'élaboration de programmes et de politiques intégrés, de soutenir des activités de défense des intérêts et de favoriser une meilleure compréhension des défis et des possibilités liés à l'économie régionale. La série de tables rondes a directement mis à contribution 275 partenaires importants pour l'économie régionale. Les discussions et des débats entourant des dossiers importants pour l'économie régionale. La rétroaction des participants confirme la valeur des tables rondes comme moyen d'engager des partenaires externes dans le processus d'établissement des politiques.
- Le rôle du secteur tertiaire et l'économie sociale dans le développement régional du Canada atlantique, Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Table ronde francophone sur le développement économique dans les régions rurales et côtières du Canada atlantique, Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick Inc., Bathurst.
- La compétence régionale, La Chambre de commerce des provinces de l'Atlantique, Moncton;
- L'entrepreneuriat, Saint Mary's University, Nouvelle-Écosse;
- Collaboration du monde universitaire et de l'industrie dans l'aquaculture, Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island;

... il est de plus en plus important pour les Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique de comprendre collectivement les circonstances qui leur sont propres et de modeler un programme pour l'avenir. La série de tables rondes a sans aucun doute constitué un excellent processus qui a su répondre à cette visée de la manière la plus concrète et rationnelle qui soit.

Eric Ellsworth, président sortant, Chambre de commerce des provinces de l'Atlantique

Les cinq études publiées en vertu de ce programme étaient :

1. Une comparaison des coûts d'investissement variables selon l'emplacement au Canada atlantique, qui démontrait que 16 collectivités de la région présentaient un avantage global de 7 p. 100 (après impôt) au chapitre des coûts, en comparaison avec 12 localités aux États-Unis.
2. Un indice du développement humain qui présentait une comparaison de la situation socioéconomique du Canada atlantique et de celle des autres pays du G7 et qui démontrait que, même si elle avait plusieurs défis à relever au chapitre de la compétitivité, la région n'était devancée que par la moyenne canadienne.
3. Un classement du Canada atlantique et des 50 états, selon la compétitivité de chacun, qui indiquait que la région se trouve à peu près à égalité avec ses voisins de la Nouvelle-Angleterre.
4. Un classement semblable fondé sur la compétitivité, mais qui comparait la région à 48 économies dans le monde, selon lequel le Canada atlantique se situait à peu près au milieu du groupe.
5. Une version approfondie de la première étude, dans laquelle on comparait les coûts d'investissement variables selon l'emplacement dans quatre villes du Canada à ceux de 23 autres endroits de l'Amérique du Nord et de 15 villes d'Europe. Le Canada arrivait au premier rang des sept pays comparés, et les quatre villes représentatives du Canada atlantique occupaient les quatre premiers rangs parmi les 42 villes comparées.

La série de tables rondes visait à explorer des sujets de recherche et des renseignements économiques en collaboration avec des partenaires de la région de l'Atlantique. Le processus a commencé en 1995 et avait pour but de créer un lieu de rencontre où l'Agence pourrait réunir des universitaires éminents, des experts politiques des secteurs privé et public, des membres d'associations de gens d'affaires et des entrepreneurs individuels ainsi que d'autres intervenants, afin de discuter de questions d'importance pour le développement économique régional. Chacune des tables rondes était organisée et animée par un partenaire externe, qui participait également à la préparation de documents de discussion et produisait un rapport sur les débats. À ce jour, huit tables rondes ont eu lieu :

- Questions relatives au développement économique communautaire, St. Francis Xavier University, Nouvelle-Écosse;
- Le rôle des universités dans le développement économique, Memorial University of Newfoundland;
- Changements démographiques, répercussions et possibilités, Université du Nouveau-Brunswick;

Chapitre 10

Initiatives de recherche et d'analyse de politiques

Au cours des cinq dernières années, l'équipe responsable des politiques de l'APBCA a pris part à plusieurs projets qui présentaient trois qualités essentielles :

1. La participation du secteur privé.
2. Une consultation approfondie.
3. La prise en considération de l'avenir.

La Mesure de coordination et de recherche économiques visant la région de l'Atlantique, approuvée à l'origine en 1992, a été prolongée jusqu'à l'an 1999-2000. Son objectif est d'augmenter la capacité de l'APBCA de coordonner et de planifier les activités fédérales entreprises à l'échelle de la région qui contribuent à la croissance économique du Canada atlantique, et de soutenir des projets de recherche économique qu'il est possible d'appliquer dans la région. La Mesure s'est révélée un instrument important et souple qui a permis d'entreprendre des recherches stratégiques, d'établir des réseaux et des partenariats entre le secteur privé et le secteur public et de soutenir le précepte fondamental de la politique fédérale, à savoir instituer une économie nationale forte au moyen d'économies régionales solides. La capacité interne d'exécuter des projets de recherche et de fournir une analyse économique et statistique a été complétée par une série plus substantielle et concentrée de partenariats et d'activités externes. Ces résultats ont été obtenus grâce à des études de recherche réalisées par des partenaires et par une série continue de tables rondes, organisées par des partenaires et mettant à contribution des intervenants de l'ensemble de la région.

Le thème central de la recherche était la capacité concurrentielle à l'échelon régional. Cinq études ont permis de comparer la capacité concurrentielle et le potentiel de croissance du Canada atlantique à ceux d'autres administrations des États-Unis, de l'Europe et du reste du Canada. Les principaux objectifs de cet exercice étaient les suivants :

- Présenter le Canada atlantique selon une perspective nord-américaine et globale en se servant de normes d'appréciation reconnues dans le monde entier.
- Fournir la preuve que le Canada atlantique possède une assise réelle à des fins de compétitivité et de croissance, particulièrement par rapport aux États-Unis.
- Cerner les forces régionales grâce auxquelles on peut promouvoir les possibilités et attirer les investissements.
- Relever les points faibles qui nécessitent des initiatives en matière de politiques et de programmes.
- Dénoncer le mythe selon lequel le Canada atlantique n'est pas un endroit concurrentiel sur le plan des investissements.

*Le Cornwallis Park
éveille beaucoup
d'intérêt. À moins de
savoir le nom de
l'endroit, vous
n'arriveriez pas à
le reconnaître
au cours des deux
prochaines années.*

*Russell MacLellan,
Premier ministre,
La Presse Canadienne,
le 17 mars 1998*

*On n'a pas encore
compté les résultats,
mais les premières
fiches retournées
sont encourageantes.
La CPDA est
contente des
évaluations fournies
par les résidents
interrogés.*

*Annapolis Royal
Spectator,
le 10 mars 1998*

La collectivité jouit d'une base économique plus saine et plus diversifiée, et une installation militaire superflue a été transformée en un atout pour la communauté.

Exemple 2 : La fermeture de la base Cornwallis - La transition

La BFC Cornwallis est située à l'extrême Ouest de la vallée de l'Annapolis, en Nouvelle-Écosse. À l'instar de la BFC Summerside, elle était devenue une bastion de l'économie locale. Au moment de sa fermeture, en 1994, les perspectives étaient sombres pour les petites villes environnantes, qui perdaient une source importante d'emplois et de revenus. Toutefois, en quatre ans seulement, avec l'aide des partenaires voulus et d'un engagement opportun, la collectivité a repris vie et de nouvelles industries sont maintenant logées à l'ancienne base.

Comme elle figurait parmi les six bases militaires du Canada atlantique fermées en 1994 et en 1995, la BFC Cornwallis a reçu 7,5 millions de dollars du gouvernement fédéral à des fins d'adaptation. Ces fonds sont administrés par la Cornwallis Park Development Agency (CPDA) qui, après avoir connu quelques difficultés de croissance initiales, a enregistré une importante réussite dans le développement de nouvelles activités économiques pour les comtés d'Annapolis et de Digby.

L'ancienne base abrite actuellement 19 entreprises qui emploient 262 personnes. Récemment, le Shaw Group a annoncé l'implantation d'une usine de 18,5 millions de dollars où seraient fabriqués des meubles en bois prêts-à-monter en vertu d'un contrat avec IKEA, le géant suédois de la vente au détail. On trouve également sur la base le Centre canadien international Lester B. Pearson pour la formation en maintien de la paix de même qu'un camp d'été pour les cadets de la Marine du ministère de la Défense nationale. De plus, la CPDA a vendu 246 unités de logement qui faisaient partie de l'ancienne base, et un nouveau centre domiciliaire dynamique est en train de voir le jour.

En janvier 1998, la CPDA a expédié aux membres de la collectivité des fiches d'appréciation afin qu'ils puissent évaluer ses activités et livrer leurs observations au profit du plan d'entreprise en préparation pour l'année suivante. Selon les résultats préliminaires, les résidents accordent des notes élevées à la CPDA. En fait, il s'agit là du meilleur indicateur de succès de ce projet, à savoir la sanction de la collectivité locale.

La dernière affectation de fonds ayant été versée, la responsabilité de l'APECA se termine sur une bonne note, étant donné le succès de la CPDA. La collectivité locale a assumé l'entière responsabilité de la progression continue de son réaménagement. La CPDA est considérée comme un membre à part entière du réseau de développement économique local de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Elle continuera à chercher des possibilités et à trouver de nouvelles entreprises qui pourraient s'installer à l'ancienne base.

compagnies aérospatiales et établissements de formation. Ces transformations s'inscrivent dans un vaste projet de renouvellement communautaire mettant à contribution la population locale. L'industrie et les gouvernements. L'objectif était de relancer l'économie de Summerside après la fermeture de la base militaire au début des années 1990. Ce renouveau économique monte comment le partenariat et l'investissement prudent de fonds publics peuvent entraîner des avantages économiques à long terme.

La base militaire était le pilier économique de Summerside, une ville de 8 000 habitants. Selon les estimations, 33 p. 100 des revenus totaux de Summerside et 5 p. 100 des revenus de l'Ile-du-Prince-Édouard étaient liés à la base, dont les effectifs dépassaient 1 300 militaires et employés civils. Au moment de l'annonce de la fermeture dans le budget fédéral de 1989, la collectivité et la province, redoutant l'effondrement économique, ont fait des pieds et des mains pour renverser la décision.

Voilà presque dix ans que la base est fermée, et aucune des prédictions relatives à l'effondrement économique ne s'est réalisée. À vrai dire, l'économie de Summerside est plus diversifiée et sans doute en meilleure santé qu'elle ne l'était avant la fermeture de la base.

Le gouvernement fédéral a confié à l'APBCA la responsabilité d'unir ses efforts à ceux de la collectivité pour relancer son économie. Il a effectué un investissement unique d'environ 60 millions de dollars à des fins d'adaptation (et dépensé 60 millions de dollars additionnels pour l'établissement d'un centre de traitement fiscal à Summerside). Si la base n'avait pas été fermée, on estime que ses coûts de fonctionnement pour une période de 15 ans se seraient chiffrés à 736 millions de dollars. L'un des éléments clés du redressement de Summerside a été la transformation de la base en parc d'entreprises, à savoir le Slemmon Park, qui abrite le centre aérospatial de Summerside et inclut trois entreprises aérospatiales, l'institut d'entretien d'aéronefs et l'école de droit du Holland Collège, un aéroport et un complexe de restauration. Les taux de croissance de l'emploi en 1996-1997 dans les trois entreprises aérospatiales se situent entre 33 et 153 p. 100.²² L'APBCA a participé au financement nécessaire à l'exploitation du parc et travaillé en faveur de l'installation de deux des entreprises aérospatiales à cet endroit.

Les niveaux de fonctionnement atteints par la Slemmon Park Corporation (SPC) sont impressionnants. En 1997-1998, la SPC a loué 497 000 pieds carrés de surface. Les établissements de formation qui s'y trouvent cumulent l'équivalent de 39 484 jours-étudiants d'enseignement. Quelque 606 emplois ont été générés, dépassant l'objectif initial de 500 emplois.²⁴ Le secteur aéronautique continue de se développer et procure aux habitants de l'Ile-du-Prince-Édouard des emplois plus nombreux et mieux rémunérés. L'expérience de Summerside nous offre un exemple où des groupes communautaires, industriels et gouvernementaux forment un partenariat en période de crise économique pour créer une nouvelle infrastructure de développement économique.

[Summerside
disposera] ... d'une
économie plus forte
à long terme, en dépit
de la perte [de la
base] ou peut-être en
raison de celle-ci..
L'APBCA a été très
utile pour Summerside.

Basil Stewart,
maire de Summerside

La Corporation
estime être parvenue
à l'autonomie
financière, pour
l'essentiel...
Slemmon Park
Corporation,
rapport annuel
de 1996-1997

L'APECA à titre d'agent

d'exécution de programmes fédéraux

Au début des années 1990, l'APECA a pris en charge l'exécution d'un certain nombre d'initiatives économiques fédérales. Son expérience en matière de partenariats avec les provinces et d'autres intervenants régionaux permet la mise en oeuvre rentable d'initiatives ponctuelles ou particulières dans les collectivités. On songe notamment à l'exécution de deux types de programmes entre 1993 et 1998 : le Programme des travaux d'infrastructure du Canada à l'intention des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique, et les mesures d'adaptation.

Programme des travaux d'infrastructure du Canada (PTIC)

Dans le cadre de son programme de COOPÉRATION, l'APECA administre le PTIC dans les quatre provinces au nom du gouvernement fédéral. Il s'agit d'un programme conjoint fédéral-provincial-municipal où chacun des partenaires fournit une part égale du financement. L'objectif du PTIC est de renouveler la structure municipale, de créer des emplois, d'améliorer l'environnement et d'intensifier la capacité concurrentielle du Canada, tout en accélérant la reprise économique.

On a approuvé une somme initiale de 543,3 millions de dollars à l'intention du Canada atlantique pour la durée du programme. En 1996, ce dernier était prolongé d'un an, entraînant l'ajout de 114 millions de dollars. Au 31 mars 1998, environ 1 400 projets avaient été approuvés et avaient créé des emplois équivalant à plus de 9 500 années-personnes directes et indirectes. Les projets se répartissent généralement en trois catégories : l'élimination des déchets et l'approvisionnement en eau, les routes et chaussées, et autres besoins communautaires.

Adaptation

Au cours des cinq dernières années, bon nombre de collectivités de l'Atlantique ont perdu leur assise économique traditionnelle, soit en raison de l'épuisement des ressources, comme c'est le cas avec l'effondrement des stocks de poissons de fond, soit par suite de la rationalisation de services découlant de la fermeture de bases des Forces canadiennes. La plupart des collectivités touchées étaient des petites villes ou des secteurs ruraux, où les emplois de substitution sont rares. Dans bien des cas, on perdait le principal employeur, voire le seul.

On a fourni des fonds pour aider les collectivités à examiner et à élaborer des solutions de rechange. En collaboration avec des représentants locaux, l'APECA a institué et soutenu un groupe communautaire ou un organisme responsable qui allait se charger de la reconstitution de l'assise économique locale. Le financement sert à planifier le développement qui aide la collectivité à se forger une nouvelle identité, à trouver de nouveaux emplois et à se doter des outils nécessaires pour attirer de nouvelles entreprises. De façon générale, les fonds ne servent pas à verser une aide directe aux entreprises du secteur privé, puisque ce type de soutien est déjà fourni dans le cadre des programmes de base de l'APECA.

Exemple 1 : Slemon Park

Slemon Park est l'ancienne Base des Forces canadiennes Summerville. Elle est maintenant exploitée par une entreprise indépendante, Slemon Park Corporation, et elle abrite plusieurs

Cap-Breton. Entre le printemps de 1996 et l'automne de 1997, quelque 123 personnes (68 ménages), y compris 89 anciens résidents, ont effectivement déménagé au Cap-Breton. La Société d'expansion du Cap-Breton estime que les dépenses des retraités ont entraîné les incidences suivantes sur l'économie du Cap-Breton :

- une augmentation de 559 100 \$ des revenus des ménages;
- la création de l'équivalent de 37 emplois à temps plein;
- un supplément de 181 000 \$ en taxes fédérales et provinciales, et de 44 500 \$ en taxes municipales;
- une augmentation de 1,3 million de dollars du PIB du Cap-Breton.

Ross MacLeod est un Cap-Bretonnais qui a fait carrière pendant 30 ans à la fonction publique fédérale, notamment à Ottawa pendant les 20 dernières années. Au moment de prendre sa retraite en mai 1997, il a décidé de retourner au Cap-Breton après avoir pris connaissance du matériel promotionnel du projet de retraite à cet endroit. La nature, l'amabilité des gens, le coût de la vie peu élevé de même qu'un coup de main du personnel du projet de rapatriement des retraités ont joué un rôle important dans sa décision. « Les gens du projet de rapatriement au Cap-Breton ont été très gentils. Chaque fois que j'appelais, ils faisaient l'impossible pour m'aider. »

Certains retraités, encore jeunes et vigoureux, sont intéressés à travailler. Vince Cordeiro est retourné au Cap-Breton et a mis sur pied une entreprise qui emploie actuellement 15 personnes.

- Trouver des sources de revenu pour permettre à l'organisation de s'autofinancer avant la fin de sa cinquième année de fonctionnement.

Le SENCEN est un partenariat qui regroupe la commission scolaire locale, trois administrations de développement régional, le ministère du Développement économique et du Tourisme de la Nouvelle-Écosse ainsi que l'APÉCA. Un financement de 507 465 \$ a été versé dans le cadre de l'Entente de COOPÉRATION Canada - Nouvelle-Écosse sur la diversification économique. Les partenaires locaux, quant à eux, jouent un rôle important en donnant accès aux installations, en offrant de leur temps et en accordant un financement direct.

Le réseau SENCEN aborde deux domaines d'importance stratégique pour l'APÉCA : (1) la TI, et (2) le développement économique communautaire. Les résultats du projet sont les suivants :

- Soixante-trois endroits où le public a accès à la TI;

- La participation à un projet pilote de télétravail offrant la possibilité de travailler en milieu rural en Nouvelle-Écosse;
- La création de 47 emplois en TI;

- La prestation de services en direct, une formation communautaire en TI, des cours de perfectionnement professionnel pour les professeurs et les travailleurs de la santé, et une formation professionnelle pour les jeunes à risque et les chômeurs.

Projet de rapatriement des retraités

En 1996, la Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority (CBCEDA) a présenté à l'APÉCA une proposition visant à présenter le Cap-Breton comme un bon endroit pour les retraités. Dans le cadre de ses recherches, la CBCEDA avait examiné un projet similaire à Elliott Lake, en Ontario. Le marché cible serait les Cap-Bretonnais expatriés, particulièrement ceux qui vivent en Ontario. L'APÉCA a participé au projet en collectant les données de recherche pour proposer un financement de deux ans dans le cadre de l'Entente de COOPÉRATION Canada - Nouvelle-Écosse sur la diversification économique. En octobre 1997, la CBCEDA avait constitué une base de données regroupant 4 592 ménages qui avaient exprimé un intérêt à passer leur retraite au

Au Cap-Breton, on tente de persuader les gens qui sont partis travailler à l'extérieur de revenir vivre dans l'île à la retraite.

« Vous avez été témoins aujourd'hui du résultat d'un amalgame d'idées, d'un soutien financier et du travail acharné de gens créatifs engagés dans des partenariats qui le sont tout autant. »

Wif MacNeil, Coordonnateur du SENCEN
The Oran, Inverness (Nouvelle-Écosse), Le 3 juin 1998

Colony of Avalon

Une collectivité
ressuscite un
fascinant chapitre
de son histoire,
enrichissant au
passage la diversité
économique locale.

Le centre Colony of Avalon, situé à Ferryland (Terre-Neuve), qui a officiellement ouvert ses portes au milieu de 1997, préserve un important chapitre de l'histoire de l'Est du Canada. La colonie d'Avalon, un peuplement fondé en 1621 par Sir George Calvert, premier Baron Baltimore, est un site du patrimoine de renommée internationale.

La capacité de l'APÉCA de s'associer à des organisations provinciales et non gouvernementales a été un élément déterminant du projet visant à ressusciter le riche passé de la côte Sud de Terre-Neuve. Environ 1,8 million de dollars ont été investis dans le projet de la colonie d'Avalon par l'intermédiaire de deux ententes de

Ce projet est porteur d'espoir pour les gens de la côte Sud. Grâce à notre travail soutenu, nous sommes en train de diversifier notre économie et de bâtir l'avenir sur la force de notre culture et de notre patrimoine uniques.

Jerome White, président, Colony of Avalon Foundation

La colonie est l'une des ressources historiques prisées de Terre-Neuve. Le site est baigné par les influences des cultures beothuk, portugaise, française et anglaise. La préservation de l'intégrité archéologique de l'endroit, combinée à la mise en oeuvre des activités d'interprétation, constitue un nouveau type de développement économique communautaire. Terre-Neuve possède un nombre particulièrement élevé d'atouts culturels, et la colonie d'Avalon en est un vif exemple.

Le nombre de visiteurs dans le secteur de Ferryland est passé de 2 500 au début des années 1990, à plus de 11 000 en 1997. Au cours de chacune des cinq dernières années, de 50 à 60 personnes, presque toutes des résidents de la côte Sud, y ont trouvé de l'emploi.

Le Strait East Nova Community Enterprise Network (SENCEN)

Des comités ruraux
établissent un
complexe intégré de
TI afin d'appuyer le
développement.

En concevant le réseau SENCEN, on a voulu jeter les bases d'un secteur de technologie de l'information (TI) dans la région du détroit de Canso, en Nouvelle-Écosse, qui comprend les comités d'Inverness, de Richmond, de Victoria, de Guysborough et d'Antigonish. Les objectifs sont les suivants :

- Permettre aux citoyens, aux organisations et au personnel affecté aux initiatives économiques du secteur du détroit de Canso d'accéder à la TI.
- Créer des liens coopératifs avec les organisations au service des entreprises, les collèges communautaires et les établissements d'enseignement privés.

La Picasse

La Picasse est un centre économique, éducatif et culturel situé dans la petite collectivité acadienne de Petit-de-Grat, sur l'île Madame, au Cap-Breton. Son nom est inspiré d'un type traditionnel d'ancre en bois et en pierre utilisé dans la collectivité (les Anglo-Écossais l'appellent « killlick »). Ouvert à la fin de 1995, le centre La Picasse regroupe le Centre de développement de l'entrepreneuriat, le campus local du Collège de l'Acadie, la bibliothèque régionale, le bureau local de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, une institution d'enseignement préscolaire et un restaurant. L'intégration du Centre de développement à un vaste complexe communautaire permet de relier le développement économique et communautaire.

L'île Madame compte environ 4 300 habitants. Cinq cents emplois ont été perdus au début des années 1990 à cause de l'effondrement de l'industrie du poisson de fond. Le Centre de développement de l'APÉCA, afin de relever les défis liés à la relance de l'économie locale. Le Centre y compris l'APÉCA, compte deux entreprises, soit le centre d'appels Tradewinds et Production Picasse.

Le centre d'appels compte divers clients du Canada central et des États-Unis. Il affiche un faible coût de fonctionnement attribuable à son emplacement rural, sans compter que le taux de change actuel rend l'entreprise particulièrement attrayante pour les clients américains. En 1997, le centre comptait 12 employés, mais étant donné l'intérêt manifesté par les clients éventuels, le nombre pourrait tripler en 1998. Production Picasse est un atelier de poterie dont les oeuvres dépendent des scènes traditionnelles de l'Acadie. La Picasse symbolise la force culturelle d'une petite collectivité acadienne. Quant au centre de développement des entreprises, il représente un élément clé de la reconstruction de l'économie locale. Cette nouvelle infrastructure culturelle et économique est devenue une « ancre » pour la renaissance de la région.

Yvon Samson, directeur, La Picasse

Le Centre de développement des entreprises offre de l'espace aux entrepreneurs prêts à prendre des risques et à démarrer une nouvelle compagnie. À ce jour, plus de 30 emplois à plein temps ont été créés, et l'arrivée du centre d'appels Tradewinds laisse entrevoir de nouveaux débouchés. En fait, nos effectifs bilingues constituent un atout pour certaines compagnies intéressées à établir une partie de leur exploitation dans notre collectivité. Nous sommes très reconnaissants envers l'APÉCA, dont la contribution et l'appui nous ont aidés à concrétiser notre rêve.

Une collectivité
acadienne du
Cap-Breton crée un
centre pour favoriser
son développement
économique.

Quai de Victoria

Un village se mobilise pour reconstruire et réaménager le quai local, point central de la collectivité.

Victoria, un village de pêche pittoresque situé sur la côte Sud de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, démontre à son tour que les idées de développement qui s'amorent et se créent au sein d'une collectivité peuvent mener à des réalisations. Les atouts dont on disposait à Victoria se résumaient pratiquement à la fierté historique d'être une collectivité rurale pleine de vitalité. Le partenariat mis sur pied pour restaurer le quai du village, le point central de l'activité locale, a ragallardi le village. Les acteurs dans le cadre de ce partenariat étaient la collectivité, le gouvernement provincial et l'APÉCA.

Le quai débordait d'activité dans les années 1970. Les homardiers et les plaisanciers étaient amarrés côte à côte, et le décor comprenait un restaurant très en vogue et un étang d'élevage. Le restaurant et d'autres entreprises ont fermé leurs portes dans les années 1980, et le quai a commencé à se délabrer. En plus de choquer la vue, le quai mettait en péril le gagne-pain de 13 pêcheurs locaux. La reconstruction du quai ne représentait qu'une partie du projet : il fallait également construire un nouveau système d'égouts, une bordure et un garde-fou, et rénover l'abri pour les appâts.

De nombreux obstacles se sont dressés en cours de route, mais l'APÉCA a été sensible aux besoins locaux et s'est jointe à nous dans la réalisation du projet. Le personnel a fait un travail exceptionnel, et a su quoi faire pour que le projet prenne son envol.

Marilyn Murphy, directrice générale, Central Development Corporation

Le projet de restauration du quai de Victoria posait un défi de taille pour un village aussi petit. Il s'agissait non seulement de travaux représentant un investissement de 1 million de dollars dans la restauration du quai et des alentours, mais aussi d'un engagement à assumer la gestion continue et efficace d'un projet de cette ampleur. La Central Development Corporation (CDC) locale a immédiatement reconnu le potentiel du quai sur les plans touristique et commercial, et s'est empressée de se joindre au projet. L'APÉCA et le gouvernement provincial ont aidé la CDC et la collectivité à traduire leurs idées en un plan d'entreprise viable, puis se sont associés au projet.

Le projet a été achevé au milieu de 1995, et Victoria est redevenu un endroit où peuvent s'arrêter les milliers de touristes qui passent chaque année dans la région. Le cachet du village est tel qu'il a séduit de nombreux artisans et propriétaires de petites entreprises au fil des ans. On y trouve maintenant des poteries et des boutiques d'artisanat, des salons de thé et des cafés, un chocolatier, une galerie d'art et un atelier de théâtre de participation, le Victoria Playhouse. Le quai rénove comprend un restaurant suffisamment grand pour accueillir les touristes voyageant en autocar. Les 13 pêcheurs de homard disposent encore d'une place où ils peuvent accéder, et le village compte une usine de transformation de poisson et une poissonnerie. L'APÉCA et la CDC ont été des partenaires clés dans ce projet. L'APÉCA a assumé près de la moitié des coûts, car elle s'est rendu compte des retombées positives qui se traduiraient par de nouvelles activités économiques durables.

clients ont reconnu qu'ils ne seraient pas en affaires sans le soutien de Concept+. Les retombées économiques pour six compagnies technologiques seulement comprennent la création de 200 emplois bien rémunérés en recherche et développement appliquée, et des masses salariales atteignant 7,5 millions de dollars par année. Les compagnies qui demandent l'aide de Concept+ sont souvent soutenues par l'APBCA soit financièrement, soit au moyen de conseils techniques.

L'un des rôles importants de l'APBCA dans le cadre de ce type de développement communautaire consiste à aider les partenaires à obtenir des ressources du gouvernement fédéral et à assortir les programmes fédéraux aux besoins locaux. Ce rôle comporte, entre autres, le soutien financier, qui provient essentiellement de l'APBCA et du gouvernement provincial, mais auquel participe aussi la Banque de développement du Canada. L'UdeM et le collège communautaire s'occupent des cours de formation. L'appui en matière de R-D, est fourni par l'UdeM et le Conseil national de recherches du Canada, sans oublier des contributions de l'APBCA et du gouvernement provincial. Enfin, la CEGM, le gouvernement provincial ainsi que l'APBCA fournissent dans une large mesure les autres renseignements et conseils nécessaires.

On a procédé à une étude de cas auprès de 18 entreprises afin de déterminer l'impact différentiel de leur participation à des partenariats dans le Grand Moncton. Dix-sept de ces entreprises ont indiqué que leurs partenaires avaient exercé une influence considérable sur leur performance sur le chapitre de la création d'emplois et de la masse salariale. Le nombre d'employés chez ces 17 entreprises visées par l'enquête, 11 ont affirmé qu'elles ne seraient pas en affaires à Moncton sans l'aide de leurs partenaires. Ces 11 entreprises compaient plus de 1 000 employés en 1997 et avaient enregistré un chiffre d'affaires supérieur à 60 millions de dollars. Six autres sociétés ont révélé que leur croissance aurait été moins rapide sans leurs partenaires. Enfin, plusieurs entreprises étaient particulièrement satisfaites de leur partenariat avec l'APBCA, qui a répondu efficacement à leurs demandes d'aide financière.

L'exemple du Grand Moncton indique-t-il que le DEC est en voie de devenir un projet financièrement autonome sur le plan local? La réponse est oui, dans le sens où la collectivité prépare maintenant ses propres plans stratégiques, fixe ses propres priorités et mobilise les énergies considérables de bénévoles locaux dans la mise en œuvre de ses plans. Cependant, le DEC nécessite des fonds et d'autres ressources qui ne sont pas toujours disponibles dans la collectivité.

Il y a certes des leçons à tirer de l'exemple du Grand Moncton. C'est un dossier dont peuvent largement s'inspirer les collectivités qui souhaitent prendre leur avenir en main, et qui doivent à cette fin tirer profit des avantages, du leadership, des énergies et des atouts locaux. Le développement commence et s'exprime au niveau local, où la collectivité connaît ses forces et ses attentes. La contribution de l'APBCA, appelée à coordonner la fourniture de conseils techniques et l'appui financier du gouvernement fédéral, peut être un élément de réussite essentiel.

*Je suis très
impressionné par la
capacité de l'APBCA.
Sans son aide, nous
ne serions pas au
Canada atlantique.
Nous sommes
heureux d'être ici.*
*David Wallace,
DG, Micro-Optics
Design Corp*

que, de toute manière, ils n'en avaient guère le choix). L'évènement a donné naissance à la Commission économique du Grand Moncton (CEGM), qui est rapidement devenue le principal organisme de développement de la collectivité.

La CEGM a élaboré le premier plan stratégique de croissance économique locale en 1991.

(Il a été mis à jour deux fois depuis.) Le plan cernait des objectifs, définissait les structures et les partenariats nécessaires à sa mise en œuvre et réunissait les bénévoles nécessaires (parfois jusqu'à 500 au travail en même temps). Les succès rapides, comme la réalisation bien avant le temps des objectifs d'emploi des plans de 1991 et de 1994, ont facilité les choses. Le plan général a rassemblé de nombreux partenaires (l'APÉCA, la Chambre de Commerce du Grand Moncton, les trois municipalités, des ministères fédéraux et provinciaux, l'Université de Moncton (UdM), les campus du collège communautaire et des gens d'affaires), et un plus grand nombre encore s'est associé à des composantes particulières, notamment les partenaires les plus importants, les citoyens et groupes de citoyens de la région.

Une des composantes particulières du plan général visait le développement de l'industrie du téléservice à Moncton. Les gens d'affaires locaux se sont vite enthousiasmés pour le téléservice, considéré comme une industrie nouvelle et viable, et la CEGM s'est chargée de faire valoir les atouts de la collectivité - par exemple, le bilinguisme et la disponibilité de nombreux locaux commerciaux - afin de répondre aux efforts du gouvernement provincial pour attirer au Nouveau-Brunswick de nouvelles activités liées aux télécommunications. Parmi les autres partenariats locaux, on note les campus du collège communautaire, qui ont offert des programmes de formation sur mesure, le groupe d'intervention de Moncton (un programme fédéral exécuté par l'APÉCA et mis en œuvre pour contrebalancer les répercussions de la fermeture de la base militaire), qui a travaillé avec les campus du collège communautaire à la conception d'une base de données de travailleurs préqualifiés, et NBTEL, qui a mis sur pied un centre antistress afin d'aider les compagnies de téléservice à rester en fonctionnement si les activités de leur centre régulier étaient subitement interrompues. Les entreprises de téléservice interrogées dans le cadre de l'étude ont souvent indiqué qu'elles se seraient probablement installées ailleurs si ce n'eût été du niveau et de la qualité des services offerts par NBTEL.

Cette composante du plan, et le partenariat qu'elle représente, a entraîné la création de plus de 3 000 emplois dans le Grand Moncton et d'une économie locale qui ne cesse de se diversifier. Une autre composante particulière du plan stratégique actuel vise la création d'un parc scientifique-fisque à l'UdM. L'Université a tenu elle-même les rênes du partenariat, dans le cadre duquel ses chercheurs et ceux du secteur privé allaient pouvoir travailler ensemble à de nouveaux produits technologiques commercialisables. La ville de Moncton, le gouvernement provincial, l'APÉCA et des compagnies privées se sont associés à la CEGM et à l'UdM dans ce partenariat.

La pierre angulaire du parc est Concept+, qui est né d'un institut de recherche financé par le gouvernement fédéral et mis en place à l'UdM en 1983. Concept+ s'associe à des entreprises privées selon le régime de la rémunération des services afin d'élaborer de nouveaux produits technologiques. Le processus appuie ainsi environ 50 entreprises par année. Bon nombre de

Pour mettre le processus en mouvement, on a créé des conseils provisoires composés de partenaires traditionnels (associations de développement régional, comités d'aide au développement des collectivités) et non traditionnels en matière de développement économique (les municipalités et les secteurs des affaires et de l'éducation). À l'intérieur d'un cadre de directives fixées par le gouvernement, les conseils provisoires ont défini la taille et la composition appropriées des CDER permanents dans leur zone de même qu'un processus de sélection pertinent. À ce jour, on a mis sur pied 19 CDER permanents. Chacun d'entre eux a passé sa première année d'activité à élaborer un plan stratégique pour sa zone. Le plan, qui comporte une stratégie quinquennale de développement économique, a constitué l'assise de négociations relatives à des contrats axés sur le rendement, et qui énoncent les objectifs et les responsabilités mutuels des CDER et des gouvernements de même que les mécanismes de reddition (annuelle) de comptes. Jusqu'à présent, 17 zones ont vu leur plan stratégique approuvé.

Bien qu'il soit trop tôt pour mesurer les résultats de la nouvelle approche, il est manifeste que la coordination améliorée de même que l'intégration de programmes et de ressources stimulent la croissance économique et la création d'emplois. Le gouvernement du Canada, tout comme celui de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador, considère le CDER comme un mécanisme essentiel au développement des économies régionales. La nouvelle structure est compatible avec la philosophie gouvernementale, qui prône une approche intégrée en matière de développement économique régional, autrement dit une approche qui encourage le partenariat novateur entre tous les secteurs de la société.

Partenariats dans le développement économique des collectivités : l'exemple du Grand Moncton

Une entente à l'échelle de la région vise à mettre en place l'infrastructure commerciale essentielle aux PME.

Il s'est vite créé un vaste partenariat après qu'un employeur important, à savoir les ateliers du CN, eut cessé ses activités, et ainsi entraîné la perte d'un nombre considérable d'emplois dans la région. Cette mesure communautaire a entraîné l'organisation en 1989 du Symposium 2000 qui, fort de l'appui de l'APECA et du gouvernement provincial, a donné le coup d'envoi du processus de planification stratégique de la relance de l'économie de Moncton. Symposium 2000 a permis de convaincre les gens qu'ils pouvaient réinventer leur collectivité (et

La raison pour laquelle le processus a connu un tel succès découle en partie de la participation fort active du secteur privé au processus de consultation. Il a dirigé presque à lui seul les groupes de travail... »
Manual Hacken, agent de développement économique, CDER de Burin

Paul Pike,
président,
CDER Schooner —
péninsule Burin,
(zone 16)

*Le développement
économique se porte
bien dans la péninsule
Burin. Des choses
intéressantes se
produisent ici, et je
suis convaincu que
nous avons dressé un
plan d'avenir...*

Consolidation des structures économiques locales : l'exemple de Terre-Neuve

Par définition, le DEC est un processus à long terme qui mobilise les ressources de la collectivité et les axe vers des objectifs communs. Les exemples ci-dessous fournissent la preuve que l'expansion, pour être fructueuse, doit s'alimenter au sein même de la collectivité. La raison pour laquelle une approche a pu connaître du succès à un endroit donne s'explique par des efforts persistants fournis pendant de nombreuses années, un leadership solide dans la collectivité et la mobilisation de nombreux bénévoles déterminés à coopérer pour réaliser des gains économiques. Forte de ces renseignements, l'APBECA a structuré son soutien à l'égard du DEC de manière à s'assurer que la collectivité progresse vers l'autonomie et assume la responsabilité de son développement.

1996, l'Agence a élargi le champ d'application des CLDE de manière à ce que tous les Canadiens et Canadiennes des secteurs ruraux de la région de l'Atlantique aient accès à leurs services. Dans un récent sondage réalisé auprès de plus de 400 clients de CLDE ayant reçu de l'aide technique (mais non financière), plus du tiers (36,6 p. 100) ont indiqué que l'aide avait engendré des retombées positives. Ces clients ont démarré une entreprise ou agrandi celle qu'ils possédaient déjà. Deux tiers des répondants ont pu économiser du temps grâce à leur visite à la CLDE. Les clients qui n'ont pas démarré d'entreprise ont souligné qu'ils étaient recommandants des conseils qu'on leur avait fournis et grâce auxquels ils avaient pu éviter de faire de mauvais investissements. Plus de 82 p. 100 des clients recommanderaient sans hésiter la CLDE aux membres de leur famille et à leurs amis. Depuis qu'elle est responsable des CLDE, l'Agence a fourni des fonds d'investissement supplémentaire pour répondre aux demandes de prêts des PME en régions rurales.

Depuis la présentation du dernier rapport quinquennal de l'APBECA au Parlement, on a transformé l'approche utilisée à Terre-Neuve en ce qui concerne le DEC. Bien qu'on en soit encore aux premiers balbutiements, le modèle, l'avant-projet et les travaux réalisés à ce jour tendent vers une approche stratégique plus efficace, participative et stratégique. La genèse de la restructuration remonte au plan stratégique provincial de 1992 en matière économique, qui prévoyait l'adoption d'une approche zonale. En mai 1994, un groupe de travail se mettait en marche sous la direction de l'APBECA. Il regroupait des représentants des gouvernements fédéral et provincial, du conseil de développement rural de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador, de la fédération des municipalités de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador, des comités d'aide au développement des collectivités et du milieu des affaires. Le groupe de travail a tenu 22 séances de consultation publique et a reçu plus de 250 mémoires.

Au début de 1995 on a publié un document intitulé *Community Matters: The Report of the Task Force on Community Economic Development*. Les

gouvernements fédéral et provincial y annonçaient leur appui pour la création de conseils de développement économique régional (CDER) aux fins de la planification et de la mise en oeuvre d'initiatives de développement économique régional à l'échelle de zones.

Chapitre 8

Développement économique des collectivités (DEC)

Le DEC consiste en une approche communautaire visant à accroître la santé économique d'une collectivité. L'objectif de l'APECA est d'accroître la capacité des organisations locales de planifier et de mettre en oeuvre leurs propres priorités économiques, et de les aider à réaliser leur potentiel. En 1993, l'Agence a entrepris, de concert avec les gouvernements provinciaux de Terre-Neuve, de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et de la Nouvelle-Écosse, un processus de restructuration qui a entraîné le regroupement de nombreux organismes locaux déjà engagés dans le développement économique. Le Nouveau-Brunswick avait déjà procédé à une restructuration il y a 20 ans. Dans le cadre de La stratégie du poisson de fond de l'Atlantique (LSPA), l'Agence met en oeuvre un programme spécial de DEC visant à aider les collectivités touchées par la fermeture de la pêche du poisson de fond à créer des possibilités d'emploi. Depuis qu'elle a hérité du programme fédéral Développement des collectivités en 1995, l'Agence s'est efforcée d'intégrer les corporations locales de développement économique (CLDE) dans le partenariat établi entre le gouvernement, les collectivités et les entreprises.

Les CLDE sont des organisations indépendantes à but non lucratif dirigées par des bénévoles de la collectivité, qui offrent des services de prêts et de counselling aux petites entreprises des collectivités rurales. L'une de leurs principales fonctions est de s'assurer que leurs activités relatives aux prêts sont compatibles avec les plans stratégiques régionaux élaborés par les organisations locales. Dans le contexte actuel, où les ressources sont de plus en plus rares, l'établissement de partenariats efficaces constitue un rouage essentiel pour les collectivités qui veulent atteindre leurs objectifs économiques. Le rôle de l'APECA dans le cadre des partenariats consiste à fournir de l'information, de l'expertise et du soutien technique et professionnel. L'Agence fait la promotion des priorités communautaires auprès d'autres ministères fédéraux et elle coordonne le soutien dans des secteurs tels que l'information, l'innovation, l'entrepreneuriat, l'expansion des marchés d'exportation, l'infrastructure (par l'intermédiaire du Programme des travaux d'infrastructure du Canada) et l'accès au capital.

Dans son rôle de partenaire des collectivités travaillant à leur propre développement, l'APECA aide également à élaborer des liens plus efficaces entre les organismes locaux et provinciaux et elle contribue, de concert avec les gouvernements provinciaux et les organisations de DEC, à la planification et à la mise en oeuvre des priorités locales ainsi qu'à la prestation de services au profit de PME locales. L'une des principales forces du DEC dans la région de l'Atlantique repose sur la participation de quelque 1 200 bénévoles aux efforts de développement économique de leur collectivité. Grâce à leur connaissance approfondie des conditions locales, les organisations de DEC sont souvent bien placées pour exécuter des programmes destinés aux petites entreprises. L'APECA fait de ces organisations communautaires des agents de prestation de services fédéraux là où cette approche se veut la plus pratique.

Les collectivités rurales, où vivent près de la moitié des Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique et où les avantages économiques sont souvent moindres que dans les régions urbaines, sont aux prises avec des défis particuliers dans leur quête de viabilité économique. Pour cette raison, et à l'appui du programme de renouvellement économique rural annoncé par le gouvernement fédéral en

Groupe de formation Nouveau-Brunswick Inc.

Un groupe

d'enseignants et
de formateurs du
Nouveau-Brunswick
commencent à
exporter leurs
services.

Il y a environ cinq ans, l'APÉCA a reconnu la possibilité d'exporter les services de l'industrie de la formation et de l'enseignement en commerce du Nouveau-Brunswick. Un groupe de concertation composé de représentants de l'industrie à l'APÉCA a « faire germer » l'idée d'une alliance à des fins commerciales. Depuis sa mise sur pied en 1994, le Groupe de formation Nouveau-Brunswick Inc. a offert l'occasion à leurs efforts sur ces activités et de partager de l'information et des expériences acquises grâce au réseautage. Font partie du Groupe des compagnies privées offrant des services en formation traditionnelle et fondée sur la technologie, des universités de même que les Collèges communautaires du Nouveau-Brunswick. Il s'agit désormais d'une alliance vouée à l'exportation des services fondés sur les connaissances offerts par ses membres.

Le Groupe a ceci de particulier qu'il tente d'exporter des services du Canada atlantique, et non pas des produits. Des efforts considérables ont été déployés pour élaborer des politiques, élaborer des plans d'entreprise et de commercialisation et définir un mandat et une stratégie.

Récemment, le Groupe a obtenu son premier contrat de l'Agence canadienne de développement international (ACDI). Il gèrera un projet dans le cadre du Programme de stages pour les jeunes piloté par l'ACDI. On embauchera 20 jeunes qui, à titre de stagiaires, offriront une formation relative à Internet dans dix pays francophones où l'ACDI a déjà investi pour l'installation de serveurs. Il s'agit d'une réalisation majeure qui pourrait engendrer d'autres projets de l'ACDI.

Ce contrat comportera d'autres avantages, à savoir un partenariat avec le Centre canadien d'études et de coopération internationales, qui participe à des marchés avec l'ACDI depuis de nombreuses années et qui a placé quelque 900 stagiaires dans plus de 23 pays. L'expertise internationale du Centre assurera non seulement un accès souple pour le Groupe, mais lui permettra aussi de bénéficier d'un transfert de connaissances. Le Centre s'est dit intéressé à établir un partenariat à long terme avec le Groupe, reconnaissant du même coup qu'il s'agit d'un moyen idéal pour établir des consortiums avec les secteurs privé et public. Le Groupe recherche également des possibilités de travail contractuel en Roumanie, en Jamaïque, et à la Trinité-et-Tobago.

Il existe un lien étroit entre l'expansion des exportations et la croissance de l'emploi. Selon Industrie Canada, chaque milliard de dollars en exportations crée de 6 000 à 8 000 nouveaux emplois²¹. Dans le cadre de son mandat visant à promouvoir le développement économique du Canada atlantique, l'APÉCA se doit de compter l'expansion du commerce au nombre de ses priorités. En fait, c'est là une priorité. Compte tenu de l'attention plus grande accordée aux PME, habituellement moins bien préparées que les grandes compagnies en vue de l'exportation, cette partie du mandat de l'APÉCA revêt une signification beaucoup plus décisive.

Promotion du commerce international

Une entente à l'échelle de la région vise à mettre en place l'infrastructure commerciale essentielle aux PME.

L'Entente de COOPÉRATION entre le Canada et les provinces de l'Atlantique sur la promotion du commerce extérieur (PCE), conclue en 1994, et dotée d'un budget de trois millions de dollars, devait initialement durer trois ans. Par suite des leçons apprises et des résultats obtenus, l'entente a été prolongée en 1997 pour une autre période de trois ans et a bénéficié de 2 millions de dollars supplémentaires. La PCE sert à la fois de mécanisme pour mettre en place l'infrastructure essentielle au commerce et de moyen pour les PME d'acquérir de l'expérience en exportation. Elle appuie l'une des priorités de l'APÉCA, à savoir le commerce, et fournit un point de rencontre favorable au partage des connaissances, des mesures et des ressources financières dans le but d'aider les compagnies de la région de l'Atlantique à développer le commerce international. L'Entente met à contribution trois ministères fédéraux de même que les quatre gouvernements provinciaux.

La PCE est importante dans la mesure où elle permet aux provinces de l'Atlantique de tirer profit d'économies d'échelle dans la promotion du commerce et de contribuer à l'initiative globale d'Equipe Canada. En outre, elle permet à chaque province, moyennant un investissement relativement faible, de profiter de ressources substantielles par la mise en place d'une infrastructure commerciale ou l'établissement de nouveaux marchés. Ainsi, la région et ses entreprises peuvent bénéficier d'une reconnaissance accrue sur les marchés étrangers et d'une plus large diffusion de leurs produits.

En mars 1998, on avait mené une enquête auprès de 486 PME de la région de l'Atlantique qui avaient participé à des projets de PCE. Le but était de connaître les progrès réalisés et les résultats obtenus jusqu'alors. Les 295 compagnies ayant répondu à l'enquête attribuent les résultats suivants à leur participation aux projets de PCE :

- 38,6 p. 100 des répondants se sont lancés dans l'exportation ou ont accru leurs activités à ce chapitre;
- 52,2 p. 100 ont cerné de nouveaux marchés potentiels;
- 64,1 p. 100 ont noué des liens précis sur des marchés d'exportation;
- 46,4 p. 100 ont modifié leurs produits ou leurs procédés par suite de leur participation à un projet.

²¹ Partie III du Budget des dépenses d'Industrie Canada de 1998-1999 - Rapport sur les plans et les priorités.

L'an 2000 nous donne l'occasion de mettre notre région à l'avant-scène, sous les projecteurs internationaux. Les gens viendront ici pour voir les Vikings, mais repartiront en évoquant nos gens et le caractère unique de notre province.

Kandy Letto, gestionnaire en marketing, Viking Trail Tourist Association

en vue de la fête commémorative de l'arrivée des premiers Européens en Amérique du Nord, qui aura lieu en l'an 2000. Ce partenariat a été motivé par une vision commune selon laquelle le travail collectif permettrait à la région de s'épanouir pleinement sur le plan touristique et aiderait à compenser le déclin de l'industrie du poisson de fond.

Comme l'histoire des Vikings remonte à un millier d'années, la région est bien placée pour tirer profit de l'intérêt croissant dont jouit le tourisme éducatif et culturel. La célébration du millénaire de l'arrivée des Vikings, en l'an 2000, a été considérée à un moment donné comme étant l'objectif final du projet. Maintenant, on la perçoit comme le point de départ de grands événements à venir.

plantent des promotions et des offres spéciales. Après avoir constaté la popularité du premier festival, les grandes compagnies d'autocar ont prévu des itinéraires particuliers pour l'événement.

Exemple 2 : Baie de Bouctouche —

Sentier de la baie intérieure et plan directeur d'écotourisme

La zone côtière près de Bouctouche, dans l'est du Nouveau-Brunswick, a été transformée en destination touristique de premier plan qui allie l'environnement et la culture locale. Le centre d'interprétation Eco-Centre Irving « la Dune de Bouctouche » nouvellement construit a récemment remporté le prestigieux prix « Tourism for Tomorrow » de British Airways. Le centre fait partie d'une série d'attractions, dont un réseau de sentiers pédestres autour de la baie intérieure ainsi que le centre d'interprétation du patrimoine acadien appelé le « Pays de la Sagouine ». Le nombre de visiteurs au Pays de la Sagouine est passé de 41 400 en 1993 à 73 000 en 1997. La collectivité de la baie de Bouctouche fait fond sur cet investissement. En 1997, l'Eco-Centre a attiré à lui seul 88 500 visiteurs pratiquement sans aucune publicité.

L'APÉCA a participé de plusieurs manières au développement de l'infrastructure touristique régionale. En partenariat avec le gouvernement provincial, la collectivité et le secteur privé, l'Agence a élaboré un plan directeur intégré en matière d'écotourisme. Elle a également aidé à construire les sentiers autour de la baie intérieure qui relient les diverses attractions de la région. Le développement d'un vaste complexe d'attractions écologiques et culturelles dans la région de Bouctouche encourage la venue d'un plus grand nombre de touristes.

Exemple 3 : Le sentier des Vikings

Le sentier des Vikings est une initiative visant à développer et à commercialiser l'industrie touristique dans les secteurs de la péninsule Great Northern et du détroit du Labrador, à Terre-Neuve. Ce n'est pas un sentier pédestre comme tel, mais plutôt un complexe global reliant les collectivités, les attractions et les installations dans le but d'attirer un plus grand nombre de touristes dans la région. Les sites d'interprétation, l'aménagement paysager et les améliorations apportées aux hôtels et aux restaurants sont des éléments clés de la mise en valeur du patrimoine culturel de la région dans le but d'accroître le potentiel touristique.

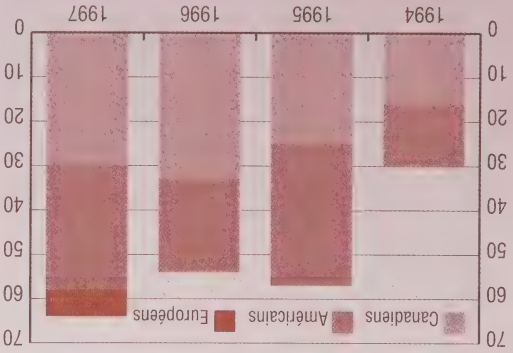
La signalisation commune et les efforts de commercialisation sont des preuves tangibles du travail réalisé autour du sentier. Toutefois, les liens sous-jacents mettent à contribution des partenaires de tous les paliers de gouvernement, notamment l'APÉCA, les collectivités de la région et le secteur privé. L'accord sur le tourisme du sentier des Vikings, signé en 1994, déterminait les partenaires et leurs rôles ainsi que l'orientation stratégique pour préparer la région

En unissant nos efforts pour aménager les dunes côtières... nous travaillons tous à la création d'une fiducie publique.. Les Irving sont très fiers de participer à cet important projet.
J.D. Irving, Irving Group

Les collectivités de la péninsule Great Northern jouissent d'un appui dans leurs efforts pour améliorer l'industrie touristique locale.

Des enquêtes de suivi ont permis d'évaluer les repercussions économiques du Salon. Pour le seul secteur des circuits d'autocar, les données estimatives ont quadruplé, passant de 10 millions de dollars en 1994, à 40 millions de dollars en 1997. Il s'agit de repercussions complémentaires, dans la mesure où elles ne tiennent compte que des compagnies d'autocar qui ont décidé de se rendre au Canada atlantique après avoir participé au Salon. Outre ces méthodes de développement touristique qui englobent toute la région de l'Atlantique, l'APECA a activement soutenu divers projets très prometteurs à l'échelon provincial.

Acheteurs présents au Salon



Exemple 1 : Le Celtic Colours International

La musique celtique est l'une des assises de la culture de l'île du Cap-Breton. Le festival international des couleurs celtiques, inauguré en octobre 1997, a offert l'occasion de mettre en évidence des talents locaux, de célébrer des traditions culturelles bien ancrées et d'établir un événement qui a déjà rapporté de solides avantages économiques. Le festival, qui regroupait plus de 300 musiciens du Cap-Breton et d'ailleurs, a attiré une foule d'environ 4 000 visiteurs de l'extérieur de l'île et a été classé parmi les 100 meilleures attractions nord-américaines par l'*American Bus Association*. Le festival a permis de prolonger la saison touristique annuelle et a posé des jalons solides en vue de la tenue d'une manifestation annuelle.

L'APECA soutient un festival qui célèbre le patrimoine musical du Cap-Breton.

La *Celtic Colours Festival Society* a organisé le festival à l'aide d'un soutien financier provenant de plusieurs sources, notamment l'APECA, le gouvernement provincial et diverses sociétés commanditaires (Dane Raymond, Budget Rent-a-Car et FORTIS). L'événement, qui a coûté 620 000 \$, a rapporté de 2,9 à 3,5 millions de dollars à l'économie du Cap-Breton. On a

évalué à 11 700 le nombre de participants aux activités organisées dans le cadre du festival.³⁰ Selon des sondages réalisés après le festival, la moitié des entreprises touristiques ont enregistré une augmentation de leur chiffre d'affaires comparativement à l'année précédente. Ces exploitants, enthousiastes à l'idée des possibilités offertes par le festival de 1998,

Nous considérons également que notre saison prolongée a été fructueuse, et nous savons que le festival des couleurs celtiques y a contribué. La plupart des gens qui sont venus chez nous s'étaient déplacés pour venir au festival.

Rodney Chiasson, gestionnaire, Nova Scotia Highland Village

de normaliser l'évaluation des logements couverts dans la région. L'APÉCA a offert un appui financier primordial à la RETPA.

Les touristes sont de plus en plus raffinés et s'attendent à séjourner dans des logements de qualité supérieure. Des critères uniformisés sont des outils de commercialisation particulièrement utiles pour les petits exploitants qui n'ont pas la cotation standard permettant habituellement de distinguer les grandes chaînes.

Le nombre de logements évalués dans la région est passé de 415 en 1991, à 2 284 en 1997. Le programme d'évaluation des emplacements de camping a été mis en place en 1995 et 166 emplacements ont été évalués en 1997.

Mis à part les chiffres présentés ici, il existe des preuves que les progrès de la RETPA sont à

l'origine d'autres succès. Le taux d'efficacité est supérieur depuis que l'évaluation a été combinée à la délivrance de permis dans trois des quatre provinces (la Nouvelle-Écosse n'est pas du nom-

bre). La RETPA est également à l'origine du développement et de la mise en oeuvre du système de cotation Canada Select, de plus en plus utilisé partout au Canada. La cote normalisée d'une étoile Canada Select est maintenant considérée comme l'exigence minimale pour l'attribution de licences dans les trois provinces de l'Atlantique participantes. La RETPA commence à mettre son expérience et ses compétences à profit dans d'autres régions du Canada, où elle exécute des programmes de mise en oeuvre de systèmes de cotation de

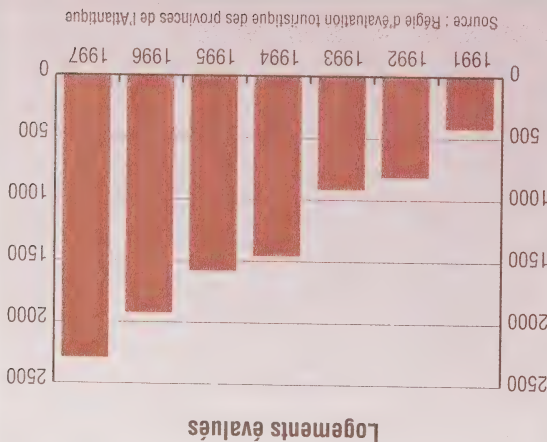
l'hébergement, d'assurance de la qualité et de formation des travailleurs du secteur touristique.

Le Salon du tourisme du Canada atlantique, créé en 1994, propose une autre forme de

partenariat en matière de commercialisation. L'initiative met à contribution l'APÉCA, les quatre ministères provinciaux du tourisme et les associations touristiques. Le Salon permet aux exploitants du tourisme de l'Atlantique de rencontrer des acheteurs, en particulier des compagnies qui offrent des circuits en autocar. Le nombre de vendeurs réunis à cet événement est passé de 74 en 1994, à 164 en 1997. En outre, le nombre d'acheteurs s'est accru considérablement et comptait pour la première fois des représentants européens en 1997.

Au cours des deux dernières années, le nombre de gens qui nous ont choisis en raison de notre cotation a fait un bond spectaculaire. Les visiteurs ne cessent de me répéter qu'ils préfèrent s'appuyer sur un système de cotation cohérent.

Martienne Larsen, Larsen's Log Lodge, Millville (Nouveau-Brunswick), propos rapportés dans le numéro de février 1998 du bulletin Tourism Excellence Inc.



Chapitre 6 Tourisme

Le Partenariat du Canada atlantique représente « ... une étape majeure dans la poursuite d'une approche centrée et coordonnée pour développer l'industrie touristique au Canada atlantique ».

Rapport du vérificateur général du Canada à la Chambre des communes, novembre 1995

Notre industrie est en grande partie composée de petites entreprises qui fonctionnent avec des ressources limitées. L'Entente sur le tourisme dans la région de l'Atlantique réunit les petits et les grands exploitants et les gouvernements pour offrir des avantages que nous ne pourrions pas obtenir seuls.

John Slipp, président, Association de l'industrie touristique du Nouveau-Brunswick

C'est sans doute dans le secteur du tourisme, plus que dans toute autre composante de l'économie du Canada atlantique, que l'APCA a fait le plus d'efforts pour promouvoir une approche régionale. À cette fin, l'Agence a créé de nouveaux partenariats dans un secteur traditionnellement très fragmenté, ce qui a eu pour effet de susciter une synergie grandissante entre les partenaires, chacun y contribuant des qualités et des ressources différentes. Plusieurs exemples illustrent le rôle important qu'a joué l'APCA.

Les membres du **Partenariat du tourisme du Canada atlantique** (PTCA), créé en 1993, sont l'APECA, les quatre ministères provinciaux du tourisme, les quatre associations provinciales de l'industrie touristique de même que Tourisme Canada (devenu aujourd'hui la Commission canadienne du tourisme). Son mandat consiste à établir une relation solide entre l'industrie et le gouvernement, pour développer et promouvoir le tourisme en Atlantique. Depuis 1994, le PTCA a complété les efforts des provinces en matière de commercialisation du tourisme à l'échelle nationale et internationale en menant des campagnes intensives de publicité et de publipostage pour l'ensemble de la région.

Depuis 1994, des efforts publicitaires ont été dirigés vers le Canada central, la Nouvelle-Angleterre, les États de New York, de la Pennsylvanie et du New Jersey, l'Angleterre, l'Allemagne et le Japon. On estime que les dépenses effectuées à ce chapitre en 1994, 1995, 1996 et 1997 ont rapporté des recettes touristiques supplémentaires de 66 millions de dollars. Ces efforts de commercialisation ont entraîné un rendement substantiel des fonds publics dépensés. À titre d'exemple, la plus récente campagne, en 1997, a généré près de six dollars en dépenses touristiques pour chaque dollar investi. Au cours des quatre dernières années, les campagnes de commercialisation ont engendré un total de 268 000 demandes de renseignements; environ 25 p. 100 des demandes se sont traduites par des visites, de sorte que 67 000 nouveaux touristes ont séjourné dans la région. Quelque 65 entreprises et organisations du secteur privé ont dépensé plus de 1,5 million de dollars sur des campagnes de commercialisation coopératives menées par le PTCA.

Le PTCA a également fourni aux intervenants de l'industrie touristique un point de rencontre où ils peuvent discuter d'intérêts communs, partager des perspectives et des solutions, réaliser des études de marché, adopter des positions de principes communes, et élaborer des plans d'action conjoints. La conférence de 1996 intitulée « Le tourisme au Canada atlantique : prendre le virage au XXI^e siècle », qui a débouché en 1997 sur l'Entente sur le tourisme dans la région de l'Atlantique, constitue un exemple de ce type de rencontre. L'Entente, financée à 50 p. 100 par l'APECA et administrée par le PTCA, prévoit des ressources financières pour les activités du PTCA jusqu'en mars 2000.

Si le PTCA met l'accent sur la commercialisation, la **Régie d'évaluation touristique des provinces de l'Atlantique** (REPTA) s'occupe de la qualité de l'hébergement touristique. Fondée en 1990, la REPTA est une organisation à but non lucratif dont le mandat est de promouvoir et

Exemple 3 : Les centres d'entreprises des YMCA-YWCA de St. John's et de Glace Bay

À Terre-Neuve et au Labrador, l'événement Entreprise Olympics est une compétition annuelle organisée par le Centre d'entreprises YMCA-YWCA de St. John's. Des entrepreneurs en herbe participent à des séminaires donnés par des entrepreneurs établis qui ont réussi, puis se livrent à des jeux visant à promouvoir l'esprit d'entreprise - par exemple, développer en une demi-heure un plan de mise en marché pour un nouveau produit. Les élèves participent également à une foire commerciale, où les stands sont jugés selon la créativité du design et de l'idée commerciale.

Les responsables du Centre d'entreprises du Y considèrent qu'il est important de s'occuper des jeunes si on veut développer une attitude saine à l'égard de l'entrepreneuriat. Le centre fournit de l'aide à ceux qui songent à démarrer leur propre entreprise. Des conseillers aident les clients à élaborer un plan d'entreprise et peuvent même les appuyer dans la recherche du financement nécessaire au démarrage d'une entreprise. Ce processus est tout aussi important, voire plus important, que le résultat final. Le centre fonctionne grâce à du financement de base fourni par l'APÉCA et Développement des ressources humaines Canada. Le développement d'une culture entrepreneuriale demeure au cœur du mandat de l'APÉCA. Plus la clientèle rejointe est jeune, meilleures sont les chances de développer ce type de culture.

Au cours des cinq ans écoulés entre 1993 et 1997, le Centre d'entreprises du Y a répondu à 6 600 demandes de renseignements et s'est occupé de 1 054 clients; il peut revendiquer une participation à 128 démarrages d'entreprises. Ces nouvelles entreprises ont permis de créer quelque 238 emplois. Selon le centre, 70 p. 100 des entreprises existent toujours.

Un autre centre d'entreprises est annexé au YMCA de Glace Bay, en Nouvelle-Écosse. Créé en 1987 par Emploi et Immigration Canada (aujourd'hui DRHC), le centre compte actuellement cinq employés secondés par deux étudiants pendant l'été. Au début de 1998, le centre avait enseigné des compétences entrepreneuriales à près de 1 000 clients par le biais de ses programmes de formation et de perfectionnement, aidé 273 entreprises à démarrer et contribué à la création de près de 600 emplois. Quelque 41 p. 100 des entreprises sont toujours en activité.

Les jeunes aiment le Centre d'entreprises du Y. « Le professionnalisme de votre personnel a contribué à la réalisation fructueuse de mon plan d'entreprise. Je possède maintenant une base solide à partir de laquelle je peux jeter les fondations de mon entreprise ».

Geoffrey Moulton, InterFax Inc.

Tout bien pesé, je recommanderais le Centre d'entreprises du Y à quiconque entend démarrer sa propre entreprise. Les connaissances et l'aide que m'a fournies le personnel étaient inestimables».

Cheryl Parsons

À Terre-Neuve, l'APECA a continué de fournir son soutien à la Tormegait Ujaganavini Corporation (TUC), près de Nain (Labrador). Cette filiale en propriété exclusive de la Labrador Inuit Development Corporation exploite des carrières de roche anorthositique qu'elle exporte en blocs. En 1997-1998, l'Agence a financé la construction d'une installation de transformation des blocs d'anorthosite à Hopedale (Labrador).

Les principaux rôles de l'APECA dans le cadre de l'ICDE ont été de faciliter l'accès des clients aux services (adapter les programmes aux besoins particuliers des Autochtones) et de coordonner l'approche de plusieurs autres partenaires du développement de l'esprit d'entreprise chez les Autochtones. Là encore, l'initiative démontre la façon dont l'APECA est progressive-ment devenue la représentante du gouvernement fédéral pour un large éventail de programmes au Canada atlantique. La souplesse et l'adaptabilité distinguent la méthode de l'Agence lorsque celle-ci exécute des projets qui visent à adapter des programmes existants aux besoins de collectivités particulières.

- Le programme d'entrepreneuriat pour les jeunes Autochtones s'adresse au groupe des 18 à 29 ans. Il initie ces derniers au concept des petites entreprises au moyen d'une formation en classe et d'exposés donnés par des conférenciers. Ce programme d'une durée d'environ 100 heures vise à sensibiliser les jeunes aux possibilités qu'offrent les PME.
- Un programme sur les possibilités d'affaires, qui vise à aider les gens à trouver des idées porteuses de possibilités commerciales. Le programme dure de 18 à 30 heures, au terme desquelles les participants sont prêts à dresser un plan d'entreprise et à passer à d'autres programmes tels Femmes vers l'entrepreneuriat.
- Le programme de formation et d'encadrement Femmes vers l'entrepreneuriat, expressément conçu pour les femmes entrepreneures qui souhaitent démarrer une petite entreprise ou qui viennent de le faire. Ce programme comprend de 220 à 280 heures consacrées à la formation, à l'encadrement, à des discussions en table ronde et à l'établissement de réseaux avec des personnes-ressources dans les PME afin de mieux comprendre ce que représentent le développement et la gestion d'une entreprise et, plus particulièrement, la préparation d'un plan d'entreprise.

clientèle précise :

cadre de l'ICDE. Les trois programmes suivants ont été conçus à l'intention d'une On a également engagé quatre coordinateurs pour les activités sur le terrain dans le cadre de l'ICDE. Les trois programmes suivants ont été conçus à l'intention d'une

L'harmonisation des programmes de développement de l'entrepreneuriat avec les besoins spéciaux des Autochtones s'est avérée un travail exigeant qui a fait appel à l'expérience de l'APECA en matière de coordination. L'Agence a engagé deux coordinateurs (tous deux Autochtones) pour soutenir l'exécution du programme.

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En avril 1998, Mme Ward était l'une des 15 femmes des Premières nations de Red Bank et d'Eel Ground à réussir un cours organisé dans le cadre du programme Femmes vers l'entrepreneuriat donné par la Banque de développement du Canada et payé par l'APECA et DRHC.

Le programme Femmes vers l'entrepreneuriat a été fantasmagorique. Ronalda Ward, aspirante propriétaire d'immeubles de location résidentielle.

L'objectif est d'améliorer les compétences et les possibilités entrepreneuriales de la collectivité noire de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Un processus de consultation a initialement permis de cerner les contraintes au développement de la collectivité. La MVGAN a été approuvée au milieu de 1995, et a bénéficié d'un engagement de 5 millions de dollars sur cinq ans dans le cadre de l'Entente de COOPÉRATION Canada - Nouvelle-Écosse sur la diversification économique. Elle comporte quatre objectifs :

- favoriser l'indépendance économique des particuliers;
- promouvoir le développement de l'entreprise, l'éducation et la formation parmi la communauté noire;
- créer des partenariats et des liens avec le grand milieu des affaires;
- créer un accès au soutien commercial des secteurs privé et public et l'améliorer.

Le fait que la MVGAN s'étende à des foires et à des missions commerciales a aidé au moins deux entrepreneurs à vendre leurs produits dans de nouveaux marchés. Dana Emmerson, président d'Environmental Disposal Concepts Ltd., de Dartmouth, a présenté son broyeur d'ampoules fluorescentes breveté à la foire commerciale de Boston, où il en a vendu 20. « Sans ce type de mission commerciale, il est difficile pour les entreprises de s'établir dans des marchés plus vastes comme celui de Boston », reconnaît M. Emmerson. Brad Miller, propriétaire de Classic Cheesecakes de Sydney, est également allé à Boston. « Deux distributeurs de même que la compagnie Market Basket (une chaîne de 57 épiceries) vendront quatre de mes produits », indique M. Miller.

La participation de l'APECA à un programme visant à développer les compétences en gestion d'entreprise chez les Autochtones du Nouveau-Brunswick l'a amenée à adapter son expertise particulière dans le développement de l'entrepreneuriat, à donner accès à de l'information et à des services et à coordonner son travail avec celui de partenaires aux fins de l'exécution efficace de programmes.

Au Nouveau-Brunswick, on compte 15 collectivités des Premières nations et un conseil hors réserve ce qui représente une population totale d'environ 10 000 personnes. L'initiative conjointe de développement économique (ICDE), créée en 1994, a pour but de promouvoir le développement économique autochtone dans la province. Il s'agit d'un programme tripartite fédéral-provincial-autochtone qui permet de définir et d'exploiter des possibilités favorisant le développement économique autochtone.

En Nouvelle-Écosse et au Nouveau-Brunswick, on a élaboré des initiatives pour les collectivités spéciales. La mesure visant les gens d'affaires noirs (MVGAN) s'inscrit dans un partenariat dont

Exemple 2 : Promotion de l'entrepreneurs dans les collectivités spéciales

Le CEBD a pris part à plus de 40 projets depuis sa création, à la fin de 1995. Il a rejoint plus de 40 000 jeunes personnes par le biais de cours, de camps d'été, de conférences et de programmes. Le centre travaille à la conception de programmes destinés aux élèves de la 3e à la 12e année. Au cours de l'année scolaire 1996-1997, 1 756 élèves de la 12e année de 55 écoles étaient inscrits au cours sur l'entrepreneurs conçu par le centre. L'équipe d'employés à temps plein du centre est complétée par des étudiants engagés pour une période de quatre mois afin d'acquiescer de l'expérience en entrepreneurs et de participer à divers projets. Le programme Open for Business du CEBD entraîne directement le démarrage de cinq à dix entreprises par mois. Les responsables du centre affirment qu'ils contribuent à environ 1 000 démarrages d'entreprises par année.

Le CEBD, qui a été mis sur pied au coût de 2,3 millions de dollars, a bénéficié de contributions dans le cadre de l'Entente de COOPÉRATION Canada - Nouvelle-Écosse sur la diversification économique, de contributions du ministère de l'Éducation et de la Culture de la Nouvelle-Écosse, de même que de l'apport de participants du secteur privé, notamment Maritime Tel & Tel, la Banque Royale du Canada et bon nombre de PME de la province.

Le centre, grâce à son programme «Open for Business», a été un endroit fantastique pour partager et obtenir de l'information. Il nous a donné l'occasion de rencontrer d'autres jeunes entrepreneurs et d'établir des réseaux avec eux. Si je cherche un certain type de service, je peux le trouver par l'intermédiaire du programme «Open for Business» ou du centre.

Charles Crosby, Crosby Communications Group

d'éducation.

L'APCA aide à établir un centre qui favorise l'essor et l'étude de l'entrepreneurs par l'intermédiaire du système

Ce centre jouit de l'appui de partenaires des secteurs privé et public et est financé en partie par les recettes de projets. Les objectifs du CEBD sont les suivants :

- intégrer une formation en entrepreneurs dans toutes les composantes du système d'éducation de la Nouvelle-Écosse;
- améliorer l'esprit d'entreprise et les structures de développement en Nouvelle-Écosse;
- servir de catalyseur et de point central afin de promouvoir la contribution des particuliers, des organisations et des agences engagés dans le développement économique;
- faire de la Nouvelle-Écosse un chef de file mondial dans la recherche, le développement et la mise en œuvre de programmes d'éducation en entrepreneurs.

Exemple 1 : Le Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development (CEED)

• Orientation et éducation :

Outre la sensibilisation générale à l'entrepreneursip, les gens doivent savoir comment devenir des entrepreneurs. Les efforts de l'APÉCA sur ce plan sont en grande partie dirigés vers les jeunes. À titre d'exemple, environ 60 000 élèves des écoles publiques ont pu s'initier en classe aux concepts de l'entrepreneur-

ship dans le cadre d'un programme mené en collaboration avec des ministères de l'Éducation. On a entrepris de répéter l'expérience dans les collèges de la région.

• Formation et counselling :

Les entrepreneurs qui démarrent ou agrandissent leur entreprise ont besoin de

pouvoir compter sur une formation et du counselling pertinents. L'APÉCA se joint à des partenaires tels que les commissions économiques, les corporations locales de développement économique et les écoles de commerce universitaires, entre autres, afin de s'assurer que les intérêts peuvent

obtenir des conseils lorsqu'ils en ont besoin.

• Établissement de réseaux :

Le niveau d'interaction existant entre les entrepreneurs est un indicateur fiable de la vitalité entrepreneuriale d'une région. L'APÉCA encourage les activités qui permettent aux promoteurs d'une culture entrepreneuriale de se rencontrer pour

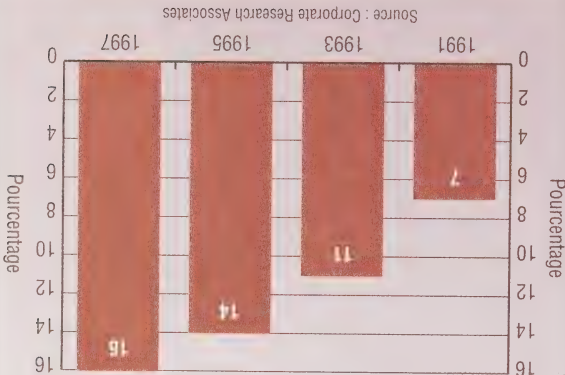
communiquer entre eux, partager des idées et coordonner des activités avec des entrepreneurs.

C'est à long terme que l'on évalue une stratégie visant à modifier les attitudes des gens pour les amener à lancer de nouvelles entreprises.

Toutefois, les premiers résultats sont prometteurs. À titre d'exemple, en 1997, 16 p. 100 des Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique ont exprimé l'intention de fonder une petite entreprise au cours des deux années suivantes, comparativement à 7 p. 100 en 1991. Quoiqu'on ne puisse déterminer avec précision l'apport de l'APÉCA à cette croissance, les activités de l'Agence peuvent être considérées comme facteur d'importance en raison de leur importante contribution au chapitre de la promotion et de l'appui au développement de l'entrepreneursip.

La réalisation de cette structure de soutien entrepreneurial demeure un élément essentiel du mandat de l'APÉCA. Dans les pages suivantes, nous présentons des exemples précis de projets concernant des activités entrepreneuriales.

Canadiens de l'Atlantique qui songent à lancer leur propre entreprise



Tom Hickey, président intérimaire,
Association de jeunes entrepreneurs - Atlantique

Il peut être très utile pour un jeune entrepreneur de rencontrer d'autres jeunes entrepreneurs pour parler et échanger des idées. Avant que nous ne fassions équipe avec l'APÉCA, il n'existait pas d'association pour les jeunes entrepreneurs au Canada atlantique. Grâce à ce partenariat, nous sommes en train d'établir dans chaque province une division de l'association de jeunes entrepreneurs.

Chapitre 5 Entrepreneurship

L'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques a publié en 1996 la stratégie de l'entrepreneurship de l'APÉCA. Dans son introduction au document, le secrétaire de l'OCDE mentionne que la stratégie présente un intérêt particulier « parce qu'elle fait de la promotion de l'entrepreneurship un objectif explicite. Souvent, de par leur formulation, les politiques sont conçues à l'assistance aux entreprises exportatrices, à l'introduction de technologies nouvelles, à la formation de la main-d'œuvre, etc. Le gouvernement canadien, lui, a conçu une stratégie complète afin de rendre son soutien aux petites et moyennes entreprises plus efficace. [...] Conçue à long terme, cette Stratégie n'en a pas moins commencé à donner des résultats prometteurs. »

OCDE. Mise en oeuvre d'une stratégie de promotion de l'entrepreneurship au Canada – Le cas de la région de l'Atlantique

Grâce à notre partenariat avec l'APÉCA dans la production de la série télévisée « Temps d'Affaires », plus de 12 000 téléspectateurs francophones du Canada atlantique ont pris connaissance chaque semaine des défis et des avantages de l'entrepreneurship. La diffusion de cette série nous permet de démythifier et de promouvoir l'entrepreneurship et d'encourager plus de gens à lancer leur entreprise. C'est là un exemple parfait de la contribution de l'APÉCA au développement de notre milieu des affaires.

Ronald Drisdelle, directeur exécutif,
Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick

• Sensibilisation et promotion :

Promouvoir l'entrepreneurship comme solution de rechange pratique aux formes d'emploi traditionnelles signifie qu'il faut connaître les défis qui se posent aux entrepreneurs. À cette fin, l'APÉCA participe à la remise de prix qui reconnaissent l'entrepreneurship à l'échelle régionale et nationale, publie des profils d'entrepreneurs et appuie des programmes télévisés tels que « The Leading Edge » et « Temps d'Affaires », qui mettent en lumière des modèles de comportement dans le domaine de l'entreprise.

• Recherche :

Pour créer une culture davantage axée sur l'entreprise, il est nécessaire de comprendre la façon dont les entrepreneurs évoluent. L'APÉCA soutient la recherche continue en matière de développement de l'entrepreneurship et des petites entreprises. Depuis 1993, il y a eu des projets de recherche sur les entreprises à domicile, les entrepreneurs francophones, les femmes entrepreneurs, les jeunes entrepreneurs et le démarrage d'entreprises. L'Agence a également produit diverses éditions d'un manuel intitulé « État de la petite entreprise et de l'entrepreneurship dans la région de l'Atlantique ».

La stratégie de l'entrepreneurship de l'APÉCA comporte cinq éléments clés :

- **Recherche :** Pour créer une culture davantage axée sur l'entreprise, il est nécessaire de comprendre la façon dont les entrepreneurs évoluent. L'APÉCA soutient la recherche continue en matière de développement de l'entrepreneurship et des petites entreprises. Depuis 1993, il y a eu des projets de recherche sur les entreprises à domicile, les entrepreneurs francophones, les femmes entrepreneurs, les jeunes entrepreneurs et le démarrage d'entreprises. L'Agence a également produit diverses éditions d'un manuel intitulé « État de la petite entreprise et de l'entrepreneurship dans la région de l'Atlantique ».

Les entrepreneurs représentent l'avenir de l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique. Plus de la moitié des nouveaux emplois, en chiffres bruts, sont créés par des entrepreneurs qui lancent de nouvelles entreprises. L'augmentation du nombre d'entrepreneurs et de gens qui, dans chaque collectivité, souhaitent rester sur place et lancer une entreprise, fera du Canada atlantique une région qui progresse avec constance et assurance vers l'indépendance financière et la prospérité.

Cette vision, formulée en 1990 dans la stratégie de développement de l'entrepreneurship élaborée par l'APÉCA, demeure le thème central du mandat de l'Agence. Depuis sa création, l'Agence a participé à plus de 650 projets de développement de l'entrepreneurship, projets qu'elle a planifiés, financés et menés à terme. Chaque projet contribuait à deux objectifs principaux : accroître le nombre de Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique qui se lancent en affaires pour eux-mêmes, et les aider dans leur quête du succès et de l'expansion.

L'APÉCA s'y prend de plusieurs manières, notamment en organisant des visites régionales pour les principaux entrepreneurs afin qu'ils puissent constater le potentiel des PME. Ainsi, lorsque la division diesel de General Motors et Hughes Delco Systems Operations ont conclu, avec le ministère de la Défense nationale, un contrat de construction de véhicules de transport de troupes blindés, l'APÉCA a organisé, en 1996, une visite de prospection de fournisseurs afin de permettre au Canada atlantique de tirer profit de l'engagement de 152 millions de dollars en retombées industrielles et régionales assorties au contrat. Par conséquent, plusieurs compagnies régionales ont obtenu du travail dans le cadre de ce contrat, notamment Apex Machine Works, L. & A., et Thomas Equipment, du Nouveau-Brunswick, IMP - Aerospace Division, de la Nouvelle-Écosse, NewTech Instruments Ltd., Garland Systems Ltd. et Steelscor de Terre-Neuve.

L'activité scientifique et industrielle reliée au domaine spatial représente un autre secteur d'intérêt. L'APÉCA a conclu un partenariat stratégique avec l'Agence spatiale canadienne (ASC), qui mise sur les capacités scientifiques et technologiques de la région et qui permet aux PME de bénéficier de projets connexes. L'APÉCA a uni ses efforts à ceux de l'ASC et des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique pour encourager la R.-D. dans le domaine spatial, plus particulièrement en automatisation et en robotique, en développant de la technologie spatiale et en sciences de la microgravité. Ces efforts accroîtront les capacités spatiales du Canada atlantique et favoriseront la commercialisation de ses technologies.

Plusieurs PME ont tiré profit du partenariat entre l'APÉCA et l'ASC :

- IOSAT Inc., une petite compagnie de Halifax, a fini par prendre en main la conception et la construction d'un terminal mobile de prises d'images par satellite, qui au départ faisait l'objet d'un contrat de 1 million de dollars favorisant la mise en valeur du savoir-faire des fournisseurs. IOSAT aide ainsi l'ASC et son partenaire commercial à mettre en marché les produits canadiens Radarsat partout dans le monde.
- Cûnig International Ltd. de Paradise, à Terre-Neuve, a signé en janvier 1997 un contrat visant un programme intermédiaire d'amélioration du lévitateur acoustique spatial à tambour aux fins de la recherche en sciences des matériaux dans le domaine de la microgravité. Le contrat est évalué à 527 653 \$.
- Measurand Inc., du Nouveau-Brunswick, a signé en août 1997 un contrat évalué à 899 606 \$ pour adapter des techniques d'animation cinématographique perfectionnées à un environnement de contrôle. Ce contrat est offert dans le cadre du Programme TSAR de l'ASC, mis sur pied pour encourager les compagnies, les universités et les organismes de recherche canadiens à développer de nouvelles technologies en robotique et en automatisation à l'aide d'applications commerciales et spatiales.

- Stratos Network Research Inc., de Terre-Neuve, a conclu un contrat de 416 488 \$ en août 1997 afin de développer un modèle de système ouvert pour la communication de données par satellite. Depuis quelques années, la compagnie Advanced Medical Technologies (AMT), de Charlottetown, a reçu environ 1,7 million de dollars pour des travaux d'usinage accordés en sous-traitance par Spar Aérospatiale, l'entrepreneur principal du projet gouvernemental de Système d'entretien mobile.

Approvisionnement et défense des intérêts

Le coût d'exécution moyen du programme a été de 3 500 \$ par emplacement, comparativement à des coûts de 15 000 \$ à 50 000 \$ par emplacement pour ce genre de programme ailleurs au Canada. D'autres administrations publiques ont montré de l'intérêt pour le modèle de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Les projets entrepris avec les employeurs ont une durée de trois ans et sont assortis d'une clause de contribution revue à la baisse d'une année à l'autre. Cependant, les sondages ont révélé qu'un nombre important d'employeurs poursuivent le programme une fois que l'aide gouvernementale est expirée. Quant aux compagnies participantes, elles font état de résultats concrets découlant du programme. La compagnie Russell Metals affirme que le programme lui a permis d'obtenir la certification ISO 9000 après l'échec d'une première tentative, attribuable à la faible scolarité de certains de ses travailleurs et à leur capacité réduite d'assimiler des connaissances. Par ailleurs, un programme exécuté par une industrie touristique de Baddeck, à l'île du Cap-Breton, a entraîné une nette amélioration des connaissances et de l'intérêt des employés ainsi que de la qualité des services offerts. Le programme a été cité en exemple par le Conference Board du Canada dans son rapport intitulé *The Economic Benefits of Improving Literacy Skills in the Workplace*.

L'ampleur de ce partenariat de même que l'engagement financier qu'il représente (848 000 \$ en vertu de l'Entente de COOPÉRATION depuis 1994, plus des contributions d'autres partenaires) témoignent de l'importance du défi que représente l'alphabétisation en milieu de travail. Toutefois, les contributions relativement modestes qui proviennent annuellement de l'Entente de COOPÉRATION ont permis de recueillir des sommes impressionnantes d'autres sources. À titre d'exemple, des contributions directes de 245 000 \$ en 1996-1997 ont permis de recueillir une somme supplémentaire de 439 000 \$ d'autres sources.

L'une des données de l'équation consiste à persuader les gestionnaires d'insister de meilleures pratiques de gestion. Il faut également répondre aux besoins des employés, particulièrement si l'on tient compte du fait qu'ils ont tendance, dans un premier temps, à résister aux changements apportés aux méthodes de travail. La Nouvelle-Écosse dispose d'un programme sur l'alphabétisation en milieu de travail qui illustre une façon de surmonter une telle résistance au profit de la compagnie et des employés.

Exemple 3 : Alphabétisation en milieu de travail

L'alphabétisation en milieu de travail est reliée au contrôle de la qualité. Depuis 1994, l'APÉCA prend part au Programme d'alphabétisation de la main-d'œuvre par l'intermédiaire de l'Entente de COOPÉRATION Canada - Nouvelle-Écosse sur la diversification économique. Le programme regroupe divers partenaires, à savoir :

- les employeurs et les syndicats, qui apportent des contributions financières et paient une partie du matériel;
- le Secrétariat national à l'alphabétisation de Développement des ressources humaines Canada;
- les participants au programme, qui doivent également fournir un engagement financier.

en oeuvre d'une structure visant à soutenir l'en-seignement des capacités fondamentales en lecture et en écriture au travail.

augmentation au chapitre de l'emploi. Environ les deux tiers des compagnies ont effectivement enregistré une croissance en matière d'emploi.

Selon les résultats de l'enquête, le soutien de l'APÉCA a joué un rôle essentiel dans la concrétisation des avantages. Ainsi, 19 p. 100 des clients ont affirmé que tous les avantages découlant de la mise en oeuvre d'un programme de gestion de la qualité étaient attribuables au soutien de l'APÉCA; 30 p. 100 lui ont attribué la majorité des avantages et 34 p. 100, certains avantages. Plusieurs compagnies ont poursuivi sur leur lancée en mettant en pratique, de leur propre chef, d'autres activités d'amélioration de la qualité. Le soutien de l'APÉCA les a encouragées à intégrer la recherche de la qualité dans leur culture d'entreprise.

Toutefois, l'enquête a révélé un besoin de rehausser l'engagement à l'endroit de la qualité et de sensibiliser les intéressés aux avantages de meilleures pratiques de gestion. L'approche adoptée au Nouveau-Brunswick est révélatrice.

Exemple 2 : Le Nouveau-Brunswick encourage le recours à de meilleures pratiques de gestion commerciale

À partir de 1996, l'APÉCA a inscrit dans ses priorités l'amélioration des pratiques de gestion commerciale au Nouveau-Brunswick. La promotion de ce type de pratiques et la sensibilisation à cet égard étaient essentielles pour éveiller l'intérêt des PME et obtenir leur engagement.

L'APÉCA a modifié son programme de services-conseils à l'intention des petites entreprises de manière à ce qu'il soit adapté aux situations dans lesquelles les agents d'affaires dénotaient chez leurs clients des lacunes en gestion. On a créé à cette fin un outil d'auto-diagnostic, en plus de préparer une trousse d'information sur les finances, les services et les produits qui soutiennent les initiatives en matière de qualité. L'APÉCA et le Groupe de formation Nouveau-Brunswick Inc. ont organisé à l'automne de 1996 une conférence sur les pratiques de gestion commerciale. Plus de 125 personnes y ont participé. Des compagnies du Nouveau-Brunswick offrant des services de formation ont mis en oeuvre 12 ateliers spécialisés fondés sur six grands thèmes. Ces ateliers ont été repris durant l'exercice 1997-1998 dans plusieurs secteurs de la province. Enfin qu'un plus grand nombre de gens puissent y participer.

Un total de 62 séances de formation ont été offertes dans plusieurs centres. Quelque 600 personnes y ont participé, et plus de 10 p. 100 d'entre elles ont assisté à plus d'un atelier. Bon nombre de compagnies participantes, emballées par l'expérience, ont jugé bon d'envoyer leurs employés à des séances ultérieures. Le taux de satisfaction à l'endroit des ateliers a été élevé. Soixante-quinze pour cent des participants les ont qualifiés d'excellents ou de très bons. Par suite de la conférence et des séances, un grand nombre de PME du Nouveau-Brunswick ont posé les premiers jalons d'un programme de formation et de gestion de la qualité.

Une série d'ateliers organisés par l'APÉCA et ses partenaires aident les PME à améliorer leurs compétences en gestion.

améliorer leurs compétences en gestion.

Compte tenu de la combinaison de secteurs urbains et ruraux au Nouveau-Brunswick, il a fallu faire preuve de souplesse dans l'établissement du calendrier et du programme de cours. Bon nombre d'ateliers ont été pris en charge par des gens des régions concernées. Nous avons échelonné les activités et les possibilités à partir de là. Cette approche a rendu les ateliers plus accessibles.

Annette Comeau, présidente et DG, Groupe de formation Nouveau-Brunswick Inc.

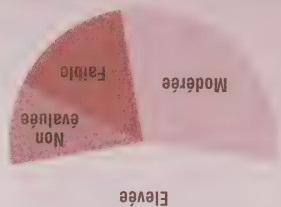
Nous avons pris en considération des exemples de matériel de commercialisation, examiné le mécanisme qui les sous-tendait, discuté de nouvelles méthodes de mise en marché et appris les uns des autres au cours des échanges. Comme la séance se déroulait dans notre région, je connaissais un grand nombre de participants et les succès qu'ils comptaient déjà à leur actif. Ces éléments ont eu un impact réel sur la situation.

Billie Jo McInosh, propriétaire de Nana's Puntty Soups, Riverbank, N.-B.

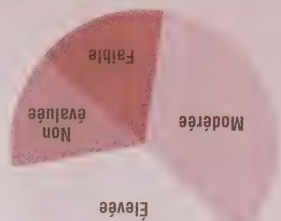
Incidence de la gestion de la qualité sur les ventes à l'exportation

En l'espace de quatre ans, nous sommes passés de 6 à 60 employés, et nous continuons à embaucher. Nos effectifs compteraient aujourd'hui 25 ingénieurs et techniciens en moins si nous n'avions pas de certification ISO.

Don Dalley, vice-président, Ingénierie, Sea Systems Ltd., St. John's.



Incidence de la gestion de la qualité sur les ventes et les revenus



Exemple 1 : Gestion de la qualité

L'initiative des PGC a pour objectif d'améliorer les compétences des gestionnaires et des propriétaires d'entreprises, d'accroître leur compréhension des avantages des PGC et d'amener les PME du Canada atlantique à appliquer davantage ce type de pratiques.

Les trois exemples ci-dessous, interreliés en bout de ligne, permettent de saisir les efforts fournis par l'APÉCA pour améliorer les PGC.

Les études démontrent que le recours aux pratiques de gestion de la qualité a une incidence positive sur la productivité et la part de marché des entreprises.¹⁸ Au début de 1994, l'APÉCA a lancé un programme visant à soutenir les projets de gestion de la qualité entrepris par les PME. En 1997, on a mené une enquête pour évaluer les répercussions de la mise en oeuvre d'un programme de la qualité et déterminer l'importance du soutien offert par l'APÉCA.¹⁹ Les deux tiers des clients qui avaient reçu de l'aide ont participé à des entrevues. La plupart d'entre eux (84 p. 100) avaient mis en oeuvre le programme ISO 9000.

D'après l'enquête, les facteurs du marché représentent l'élément catalyseur qui a le plus incité les clients à mettre en oeuvre un programme de gestion de la qualité. Le tiers des répondants ont indiqué que les besoins du consommateur constituaient le facteur le plus important, tandis que 27 p. 100 ont plutôt évoqué la capacité d'être concurrentiels sur les marchés d'exportation. Les obstacles les plus couramment mentionnés ont été les coûts connexes et le temps exigé pour mettre en oeuvre un programme.

Les répondants ont souligné que les programmes de gestion de la qualité avaient engendré des avantages appréciables, dont les plus courants étaient l'amélioration du milieu de travail et des méthodes utilisées. On a également fait état d'une plus grande satisfaction des clients, du maintien de la position concurrentielle et de profits plus élevés. Près des trois quarts des clients ont attribué l'augmentation de leurs revenus à leur programme de gestion de la qualité. Au moins 70 p. 100 ont qualifié l'incidence du programme d'élevée ou de modérée. L'examen des états financiers de 46 des 83 répondants a révélé des ventes à la hausse dans trois cas sur quatre.

Près de trois clients sur cinq (59 p. 100) ont indiqué que leur programme de gestion de la qualité avait amélioré l'accès aux marchés d'exportation. Les trois quarts se sont dits d'avis que le programme avait eu une incidence élevée ou modérée sur leurs ventes à l'exportation, tandis que près de 60 p. 100 ont fait état d'une

auraient reporté ou réduit leur investissement. Non seulement a-t-on enregistré une augmentation moyenne de huit emplois par compagnie aidée, mais les clients ont également fait état d'une augmentation du chiffre d'affaires, y compris au chapitre des exportations. Selon les résultats d'une enquête menée en 1997, les projets réalisés ont engendré une augmentation du chiffre d'affaires de l'ordre de 1,2 milliard de dollars de 1996 à 1997, soit une moyenne de 437 000 \$ par compagnie aidée. Environ le tiers des ventes supplémentaires ont été réalisées grâce à l'exportation. Soixante-huit pour cent des compagnies qui exportent ont indiqué que l'APÉCA les avait aidées beaucoup ou passablement.

Sur le plan de l'amélioration de l'accès à l'information, l'APÉCA soutient un réseau d'information commerciale axé sur la clientèle qui repose sur les Centres de services aux entreprises du Canada (CSEC), les Corporations locales de développement économique (CLDE) et les organismes de développement économique des collectivités.

Les quatre provinces de la région de l'Atlantique disposent d'un CSEC, qui offre des services et des produits aux PME et aux futurs entrepreneurs. Les centres de la région de l'Atlantique sont gérés et coordonnés par l'APÉCA; ils offrent sur place des services, des bibliothèques et des bases de données. Toutefois, une bonne partie de l'information est fournie par téléphone, par télécopieur et par Internet dans toute la région.

Les CSEC ont pour mission d'améliorer le démarrage, la survie et le taux de croissance des PME en leur donnant accès à de l'information opportune, précise et pertinente et en les dirigeant aux bons endroits. En 1993 et en 1994, on a mis sur pied des infocentres d'accès facile qu'on peut joindre au moyen d'un numéro 1-800. Depuis, ces infocentres ont créé des réseaux qui les relient aux CLDE et à d'autres organismes de développement communautaire. Ainsi, ils peuvent offrir davantage de services aux secteurs ruraux et aux petites collectivités. En 1997, dans le cadre du programme Connexion Jeunes Entrepreneurs de l'APÉCA, on a mis en service des lignes 1-800 à l'intention des jeunes de 18 à 29 ans intéressés par l'idée de lancer ou d'agrandir une entreprise dans leur région.

En 1997-1998, les CSEC des quatre provinces ont répondu à 81 406 demandes de renseignements, soit 24 p. 100 de plus qu'en 1995-1996. Un récent sondage mené auprès de clients a confirmé que les CSEC fournissent un niveau de service égal, voire supérieur, à celui des meneurs en matière de qualité des services dans le secteur privé¹⁵. Le suivi réalisé par la firme Corporate Research Associates Inc. démontre que pour 83 p. 100 des clients, les besoins d'information et de soutien ont été satisfaits ou dépassés. Pour 87 p. 100 des clients, les Centres de services se sont avérés très utiles (56 p. 100) ou assez utiles (31 p. 100) dans leur prise de décision.

Pratiques de gestion commerciale (PGC)

La recherche démontre que l'amélioration des compétences en gestion et l'application accrue de pratiques officielles de gestion commerciale peuvent accroître les chances de survie, la croissance et la productivité¹⁶. Malheureusement, les études ont également démontré que le Canada atlantique affiche un rendement médiocre en comparaison des repères établis pour définir l'efficacité de la gestion, ce qui explique en partie que le taux de survie des PME est inférieur à la moyenne nationale.¹⁷

¹⁵ Corporate Research Associates Inc., Atlantic Canada Business Service Centres, Client Tracking Program, 1998.

¹⁶ OCDE, Baldwin, Johnson, Johannis (voir la bibliographie).

¹⁷ North America Policy Group, Atlantic Canada and the World: A Development Comparison, 1996.

Accès aux capitaux et à l'information

1997, seulement 3,8 p. 100 des clients ont déclaré que l'appui n'avait pas influé sur leurs activités. Près de 55 p. 100 ont indiqué que leur entreprise atteignait ses objectifs en grande partie grâce au soutien de l'APECA. Un autre 20 p. 100 ont affirmé que l'APECA avait joué un rôle plus modeste dans l'atteinte de leurs objectifs, et 19 p. 100 ont mentionné que le soutien de l'APECA avait assuré la survie de leur entreprise même s'ils n'avaient pas réalisé leurs objectifs.

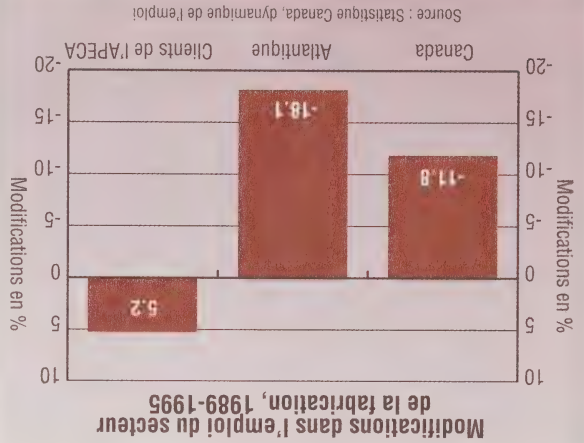
Le soutien de l'APECA peut être à la fois direct (travail auprès d'une compagnie individuelle) ou indirect (travail auprès de groupes ou d'associations industrielles). Le soutien indirect aux entreprises — afin qu'elles innovent, développent des marchés d'exportation et améliorent leur gestion ou perfectionnent les compétences de leur main-d'oeuvre — est le plus important, représentant plus de 60 p. 100 des dépenses de l'APECA (Figure 4, page 15).

En 1995, le Programme Action a donné naissance au Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE). C'est le principal moyen dont dispose l'APECA pour fournir une assistance directe aux entreprises et aux groupes sans but lucratif qui soutiennent les activités de nature commerciale. Dans le cadre des deux programmes, qui ont été conçus pour favoriser le démarrage, l'expansion et la modernisation des PME, on a commencé, en février 1995, à accorder des prêts consentis sans intérêt et sans exiger de garantie.

L'APECA encourage également les prêteurs conventionnels à augmenter leur financement aux PME en stimulant la création de fonds d'investissement des secteurs privé et public pour engendrer d'autres sources de capital. À titre d'exemple, mentionnons les prêts à PEI Capital Fund Inc. et au Fonds de capital de travail de la Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Nouveau-Brunswick, ainsi que la participation de l'APECA à la création d'ACF Capital Atlantique Inc., une société d'investissement en capital de risque.

Les données de Statistique Canada sur les tendances de l'emploi permettent de mesurer l'incidence des activités de l'APECA en matière de prêts. De 1989 à 1995, on a constaté une baisse générale de l'emploi dans le secteur de la fabrication au Canada tout comme dans la région de l'Atlantique. Cependant, pendant la même période, les clients de l'APECA ont enregistré une augmentation de 5,2 p. 100 au chapitre de l'emploi.

Les sondages de Statistique Canada auprès des clients de l'Agence dont il est question ci-dessus confirment à leur tour la contribution de l'APECA à la croissance de l'emploi et des entreprises. Seulement 5 p. 100 des clients ont indiqué qu'ils auraient réalisé leur projet sans l'aide de l'APECA. Plus de 20 p. 100 des projets n'auraient pas vu le jour. Enfin, la majorité des répondants (62 p. 100)



Développement des petites entreprises

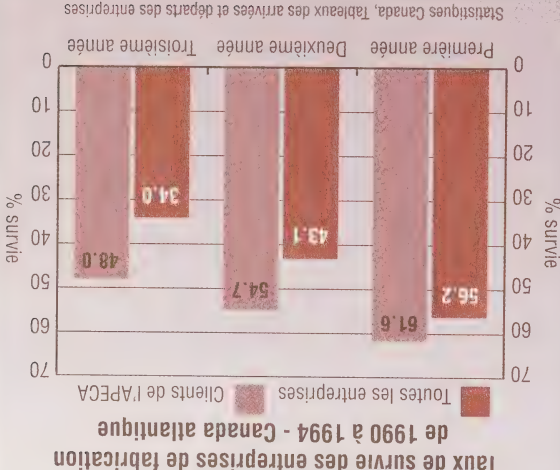
Alors que les PME comptent pour la plus grande partie de l'ensemble des activités

commerciales au Canada atlantique, au-delà de 95 p. 100 des entreprises créées entre 1989 et 1995 compaient moins de 100 employés (environ 90 p. 100 en comptant moins de 20). Les PME, qu'elles soient nouvelles ou existantes, ont contribué pour plus de la moitié (58 p. 100) des nouveaux emplois dans la région. L'importance accordée au développement des petites entreprises est tout à fait compatible avec la loi sur l'APÉCA, selon laquelle les PME sont un moyen d'accroître les possibilités économiques, d'augmenter le revenu gagné et de créer des emplois.

Toutefois, il est vrai que les deux tiers des PME échouent au cours des trois premières années d'activité. C'est donc dire qu'elles trouvent difficile d'obtenir le soutien financier nécessaire au démarrage ou à l'expansion de leur exploitation. Des études ont confirmé que les plus gros obstacles auxquels font face les PME du Canada atlantique ont trait à l'obtention des capitaux dont elles ont besoin pour bien démarrer et faire croître leur entreprise. À titre d'exemple, selon un récent sondage mené auprès d'entrepreneurs éventuels, ces derniers évoquaient un financement inadéquat comme principale raison pour laquelle leur idée d'entreprise ne s'était pas matérialisée¹¹. Dans un autre récent sondage mené auprès de clients de l'APÉCA, 62 p. 100 des compagnies considéraient

l'accès au capital comme le soutien le plus indispensable à la croissance¹². La Fédération canadienne de l'entreprise indépendante est arrivée aux mêmes conclusions dans un sondage qui a révélé que les petites entreprises du Canada atlantique avaient plus de difficulté que celles du reste du pays à obtenir du crédit¹³. L'une des priorités de l'APÉCA consiste à surmonter ces obstacles.

Le soutien à l'entreprise fait vraiment une différence. Les nouvelles PME qui ont bénéficié de l'appui de l'APÉCA ont eu une meilleure chance de survie au cours de leurs trois premières années d'activité, comparativement à l'ensemble des entreprises de la région de l'Atlantique¹⁴. Dans le secteur de la fabrication (où on a relevé une plus grande proportion de clients de l'APÉCA), parmi les nouvelles entreprises qui ont bénéficié d'un appui, une sur deux était encore en activité en 1994, comparative-



ment à seulement une sur trois pour l'ensemble des fabricants de l'Atlantique. Les entreprises soutenues dans d'autres secteurs, comme le tourisme et les services commerciaux, ont également une meilleure chance de survie. Des sondages de Statistique Canada menés auprès de clients de l'APÉCA en 1995 et en 1997 corroborent l'incidence du soutien de l'APÉCA. Dans un sondage de

¹¹ Atlantic Canada Benchmark Awareness Study, The Research Department Inc., mai 1997.

¹² Enquête de Statistique Canada sur les petites et moyennes entreprises du Canada atlantique, 1997.

¹³ Commentaire de Stéphane Robichaud, lors de la parution de l'étude Credit Where Credit is Due, de la Fédération canadienne de l'entreprise indépendante, rapporté dans le Daily Gleaner, le 28 janvier 1998, page C8.

¹⁴ Parmi les compagnies qui ont cessé leurs activités, on compte celles qui ont fait l'objet d'une fusion, qui ont changé de mains ou qui ont échoué et celles qui n'avaient pas déclaré de revenus ou rempli leur déclaration d'impôt sur le revenu des sociétés.

Terre-Neuve, de la Nouvelle-Écosse et du Nouveau-Brunswick. La SAFC a pour objet de constituer une grappe régionale fondée sur le savoir et axée sur les instruments et les services médicaux. À cette fin, elle établira un réseau d'enquêteurs et de coordonnateurs de recherche compétents; de plus, elle augmentera la capacité de dépenses en recherche clinique en améliorant la commercialisation auprès de l'industrie pharmaceutique.

En 1993, le projet de loi C-91 prolongeait la période de protection par brevet des nouveaux médicaments au Canada, afin de permettre aux sociétés pharmaceutiques propriétaires de droits de recouvrer les coûts importants du développement et de l'essai de nouveaux médicaments. En contrepartie, les sociétés ont accepté d'accroître leurs niveaux de dépenses en recherche au Canada. En 1994, 1,6 p. 100 de ces dépenses était destiné au Canada atlantique. Une étude commandée par l'APÉCA citait le besoin de coopération dans l'industrie pour maximiser l'investissement dans la recherche au Canada atlantique.

La SAFC a été créée grâce aux efforts de l'APÉCA, dans le cadre d'un partenariat avec l'Association canadienne de l'industrie du médicament et le Conseil de recherches médicales du Canada. En 1998, la SAFC est devenue autonome grâce à du financement fourni par ses membres et aux recettes d'autres provenances. La société a fait état des faits suivants :

- Elle a joué un rôle crucial dans l'augmentation des dépenses de l'Association canadienne de l'industrie du médicament, qui sont passées de 8,4 à 16 millions de dollars de 1995 à 1997¹⁰.
- De 1991 à 1997, la part destinée au Canada atlantique des dépenses totales en R.-D. au Canada est passée de 1,1 p. 100 à 2,4 p. 100.
- La Société a constitué un réseau régional composé de plus de 500 chercheurs et 200 coordonnateurs d'expérience.
- L'augmentation des investissements et des dépenses de l'industrie pharmaceutique au Canada atlantique a entraîné un accroissement des capacités de la région en matière de transfert technologique et d'essais cliniques.

L'APÉCA aide les spécialistes en recherche clinique des quatre provinces à combiner leurs efforts afin d'obtenir des contrats pour mettre à l'essai de nouvelles préparations pharmaceutiques au Canada atlantique.

Les dirigeants de l'Association ont attribué une grande partie de l'augmentation de l'investissement aux travaux de la SAFC. Elle a accompli un travail splendide en démontrant que les compétences et l'infrastructure nécessaires ne sont pas seulement disponibles, mais concurrentielles.

Greg Hines, président de l'Association canadienne de l'industrie du médicament - (Chronicle Herald, 29 mai 1998)

Les activités du PES sont concentrées sur les trois éléments clés de la réussite dans l'économie fondée sur le savoir :

- un service à la clientèle meilleur, plus rapide et plus efficace;
- de meilleures compétences en TI pour les habitants de l'Île;
- la création d'emplois dans l'industrie du savoir.

Le PES comprend un programme de financement qui vise à stimuler le développement d'entreprises fondées sur le savoir par le secteur privé. Dans un premier temps, on a reçu quelque 28 propositions, dont 21 ont été approuvées et ont fait l'objet d'un soutien financier de près de 1 million de dollars. Voici quelques-uns des objectifs du PES :

- renforcer les relations entre les gouvernements et les citoyens;
- permettre aux collectivités rurales de mieux accéder à l'information et aux services;
- améliorer et accélérer le service au public, éliminer le double emploi dans la prestation des services et réaliser des réductions de coûts;
- créer des emplois dans des entreprises fondées sur le savoir.

Au cours de la première année de fonctionnement du PES (1997-1998), les partenaires y ont investi 1 million de dollars. L'APÉCA a fourni 80 p. 100 de ce montant; le gouvernement provincial et le ministère des Anciens combattants ont contribué pour 10 p. 100 chacun.

Un programme de technologie de pointe destiné aux écoles du Nouveau-Brunswick a reçu un appui dans le cadre de l'Entente de COOPÉRATION Canada - Nouveau-Brunswick sur le développement de l'entrepreneuriat et le perfectionnement des ressources humaines. Entre 1992 et 1996, cette entente a permis d'obtenir du matériel informatique et d'accéder à Internet. Elle a ainsi amélioré les chances de survie de nouveaux projets fédéraux et provinciaux (Réseau scolaire, centres d'accès communautaires) au Nouveau-Brunswick. Les commissions scolaires anglophones et francophones ont pu élaborer des partenariats entre les milieux des affaires et de l'éducation ainsi qu'entre les collectivités et les écoles, au moyen du programme d'acquisition de matériel.

En aidant les gens à comprendre et à utiliser la technologie, on reconnaît notamment que le Canada se trouve au milieu d'une transformation économique où l'information et sa transmission prennent une place prépondérante. Si nous voulons tirer avantage de cette transformation, nos principales ressources sont les gens et leurs compétences. Dans la mesure où l'APÉCA peut aider les Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique à se familiariser avec la technologie, elle prépare la région à un meilleur avenir.

4) Aider à établir des alliances et des partenariats pour le développement de la technologie

Le meilleur exemple de ce rôle est la Société atlantique des essais cliniques (SAEC). Il s'agit d'un partenariat entre des universités des quatre provinces et des hôpitaux d'enseignement de

Cet important partenariat fait déjà de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard un chef de file dans les domaines de l'éducation, de l'information et de la haute technologie. C'est précisément son but.

L'honorable Pat Binns, premier ministre de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard

développement auquel participent les gouvernements et le secteur privé. Au Nouveau-Brunswick, on a aidé les écoles à acheter de l'équipement informatique et à établir l'accès à Internet. L'APÉCA participe à tous ces projets depuis un certain temps, du fait qu'elle reconnaît la nécessité de faire mieux comprendre aux gens ce que la technologie signifie pour eux.

Les réseaux STEM-Net (Science, Technology Education, Mathematics Network) de Terre-Neuve, et STANet (Science and Technology Awareness Network) de la Nouvelle-Écosse, sont essentiellement identiques. Le STEM-Net est un réseau scolaire destiné surtout aux enseignants, mais, de plus en plus, également aux élèves. Le STANet est destiné surtout aux adultes. On a créé le STEM-Net en 1993 grâce au soutien financier prévu par l'Entente de COOPÉRATION Canada - Terre-Neuve sur le développement des ressources humaines; il s'agit du premier serveur Internet qui rejoint toute une province au Canada. Le réseau sert de ressource en direct aux enseignants des écoles et des collèges. Le STEM-Net est situé à la Memorial University; les élèves peuvent l'utiliser pour participer à divers projets. Grâce à un partenariat avec Cable Atlantic, plus de 175 écoles de Terre-Neuve sont reliées à Internet. Une enquête téléphonique récente auprès de 440 enseignants a révélé que 90 p. 100 d'entre eux utilisent Internet mensuellement; de plus, la même proportion utilise davantage la TI à des fins d'enseignement. Le STEM-Net a eu une influence sur le développement du Réseau scolaire canadien d'Industrie Canada. Par exemple, le réseau des nouvelles du Réseau scolaire canadien est un projet scolaire national conçu et géré par le STEM-Net.

On a créé STANet en 1995 afin d'améliorer les connaissances générales en sciences. Le réseau sert de lien entre des organisations qui ont un intérêt dans la promotion de la science et de la technologie et fournit des renseignements sur les activités de TI. Son but premier est d'encourager la culture scientifique et technologique en Nouvelle-Écosse. L'objectif à long terme du réseau est la création d'un conseil des sciences de la Nouvelle-Écosse. L'APÉCA a appuyé STANet dès sa création, par le biais de l'Entente de COOPÉRATION Canada - Nouvelle-Écosse sur la diversification économique. En 1997, STANet a obtenu le prestigieux prix Michael Smith pour la promotion de la science; de plus, le réseau a été reconnu par le Conference Board du Canada pour sa contribution au partenariat entre le milieu des affaires et celui de l'enseignement.

À l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, le Partenariat dans l'économie du savoir (PES) est une alliance entre les gouvernements fédéral et provincial, l'University of Prince Edward Island, le Holland College et le secteur privé. Initialement, au début de 1997, il s'agissait d'un projet provincial ayant pour but de cerner les possibilités que l'économie fondée sur le savoir offrirait aux habitants de l'Île. Le gouvernement fédéral a reconnu l'importance du projet pour l'amélioration du climat commercial de la plus petite province du pays et a rapidement offert son soutien. Le PES a pour objet de mettre sur pied le premier réseau provincial large bande du Canada, afin de créer une capacité commerciale. L'APÉCA assure la coprésidence du PES.

[STEM-Net] permet de communiquer directement, sans frais, avec d'autres enseignants; ceux-ci ont accès à des ressources et à du matériel d'apprentissage regroupés au même endroit.

Leo Etchegary, enseignant de mathématiques au secondaire, Mount Pearl.

Nous avons été très impressionnés par les programmes novateurs de STANet, en particulier par l'utilisation des dernières technologies informatiques pour transmettre des messages scientifiques aux enseignants, aux gouvernements et au grand public. Notre but commun est d'accroître le niveau d'alphabétisation scientifique; ce dernier a augmenté fortement grâce à notre partenariat avec STANet.

Clair Ripley, coordonnatrice, Énergie atomique du Canada limitée

Exemple 2 : Le Centre de formation en travail du bois et de développement de produits à valeur ajoutée

L'APECA soutient l'adaptation des industries traditionnelles aux nouvelles technologies; puis, elle apporte une aide à la formation du personnel et des entreprises sur la façon d'utiliser ces technologies.

La haute technologie ne touche pas seulement à l'aérospatiale ou à la technologie de l'information. Elle porte également sur l'adaptation de nouveaux processus dans des industries traditionnelles, comme celles des produits forestiers, qui sont un pilier de l'économie du Nouveau-Brunswick depuis des siècles. Selon une enquête menée auprès de 230 entreprises de travail du bois (surtout des fabricants de meubles, d'armoires, de portes et fenêtres, de jouets, etc.), il existe un besoin très fort de soutien pour la promotion et l'application de nouvelles technologies au travail, ainsi que pour la formation des travailleurs dans l'utilisation de ces technologies.

En 1995, en réaction à ce besoin, l'APECA s'est associée au ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et du Travail du Nouveau-Brunswick pour créer un centre de formation en travail du bois et de développement de produits à valeur ajoutée.

Nous sommes beaucoup plus compétitifs car nous avons formé des personnes qui peuvent utiliser l'équipement au maximum. Ce type de capacité nous permet de soumissionner pour n'importe quel travail.

Kerry Ross, directeur général, Skyway Wood Products, Miramichi

Ils nous ont certainement permis d'économiser du temps et de l'argent. Pour l'industrie locale, il s'agit d'un avantage réel que de disposer d'une installation dotée de l'équipement et des connaissances.

Marc Cormier, Forest Ice Inc., Bathurst

centre pour concevoir une méthode plus efficace en vue de fabriquer des manches de balai pour le ballon balai. Skyway Wood Products, de Miramichi, a demandé des conseils au centre afin de déterminer le type d'équipement qu'il lui fallait pour utiliser un nouveau processus de laminage de contreplaqué et la façon dont celui-ci devait être disposé. D'autres entreprises

STEM~Net a évolué afin de servir les enseignants et les élèves de toutes les régions de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador; le fait de mettre l'accent sur les élèves est un élément de plus en plus important et gratifiant dans le cadre de l'évolution du STEM~Net

Nancy Parsons-Heath, directrice p.i., STEM~Net

3) Aider les gens à comprendre et à utiliser la technologie et la science

Le centre collabore également avec des entreprises afin de développer de nouvelles technologies ou de les adapter à leurs activités. Par exemple, Forest Ice Inc., de Bathurst, a demandé l'aide du centre pour concevoir une méthode plus efficace en vue de fabriquer des manches de balai pour le ballon balai. Skyway Wood Products, de Miramichi, a demandé des conseils au centre afin de déterminer le type d'équipement qu'il lui fallait pour utiliser un nouveau processus de laminage de contreplaqué et la façon dont celui-ci devait être disposé. D'autres entreprises

au campus de Campbellton du Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick. L'objectif principal du centre est de fournir à l'industrie des diplômés dotés d'habiletés en technologie qui l'aideront à maintenir et à améliorer sa compétitivité ainsi qu'à élaborer de nouveaux produits. Le centre enseigne l'utilisation de logiciels dernier cri comme Vision 2020, Paltrem System, AutoCAD, CFAO et MasterCAM.

Grâce à l'amélioration de l'accès des collectivités à la technologie, les gens apprennent à utiliser et à la comprendre. Il y a des similitudes et des différences dans la façon dont les provinces ont procédé à cet égard. Par exemple, Terre-Neuve et la Nouvelle-Écosse ont créé des réseaux de communication spécialisés. À l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, on retrouve un vaste projet de

2) Aider les travailleurs à acquérir des compétences techniques

Les évaluateurs ont conclu que le CCIP avait contribué énormément à la diversification, à la croissance, à la viabilité et à la compétitivité de l'industrie de la pêche et de l'aquaculture. Les gains actuels et éventuels découlant des activités du CCIP sont énormes et justifient amplement le budget modeste de l'organisme.

Exemple 1 : Aviation Maintenance Institute

En 1991, il n'y avait pas d'industrie aérospatiale à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. En 1998, cette industrie est la quatrième en importance de la province (selon les recettes). Le changement est survenu à l'ancienne BFC Summerside qui, avec le concours de l'APECA, est devenue le parc Slemmon, où l'on trouve diverses sociétés du secteur de l'aérospatiale. (Nous reviendrons, au chapitre neuf, à la participation de l'APECA à la transformation de la BFC Summerside en parc Slemmon).

Une expansion aussi rapide ne peut avoir lieu sans un bassin de travailleurs spécialisés. À l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, le bassin a pratiquement été constitué à partir de zéro, avec l'aide de l'APECA. Celle-ci a contribué à l'établissement de l'Aviation Maintenance Institute du Holland College, dans le cadre d'un partenariat avec Développement des ressources humaines Canada. L'institut produit des diplômés qui peuvent travailler dans les entreprises aérospatiales qui s'installent dans le parc Slemmon, comme Weibel, Testori Americas et Atlantic Turbines Ltd.

Afin d'établir le programme de cours, on a procédé à une enquête auprès de 60 compagnies de partout au Canada, qui a permis de dresser une liste de 200 compétences nécessaires. Les travaux des élèves portent sur cinq moteurs d'avion différents. Étant donné que l'institut a été mis sur pied rapidement, les premiers diplômés du programme ont terminé leur formation au milieu de 1994, alors que l'institut proprement dit n'a ouvert officiellement qu'au début de 1995. Tous les premiers diplômés travaillent toujours dans le secteur de l'aérospatiale et dix d'entre eux, au parc Slemmon.

Les entreprises aérospatiales établies au parc Slemmon emploient maintenant quelque 250 techniciens (le locataire principal, Atlantic Turbines Ltd, en emploie 150 à lui seul) dont 85 p. 100 sont des habitants de l'Île. Le salaire moyen des travailleurs est supérieur d'environ 12 p. 100 à la moyenne provinciale. En 1996, les industries aérospatiales de l'Île ont enregistré des revenus de 76 millions de dollars, soit 10 millions de dollars de plus que la valeur des homards débarqués durant l'année. Toute la production du secteur est vendue à l'extérieur de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard; la majeure partie (environ 95 p. 100) est exportée à l'étranger. Le perfectionnement des ressources humaines ne fait pas partie du rôle habituel de l'APECA; toutefois, sa réaction rapide à un besoin établi de personnel a été cruciale en vue de récupérer des emplois perdus, lors de la fermeture de la BFC Summerside, a été

Lorsqu'une collectivité s'efforce de renouveler son assise économique après la fermeture d'une base militaire, l'APECA appuie la création de nouvelles industries.

L'industrie de l'aviation connaît une croissance radicale; par conséquent, elle avait un besoin criant de personnel formé. Les membres de tous les secteurs de l'industrie aérospatiale de l'Île estimaient que le principal obstacle au développement de l'industrie est l'absence de formation et d'éducation permanente.

Alex MacAuley, président, Holland College.

Le travail dans les multimédias fait appel à diverses compétences, y compris celles d'artistes (photographiques, vidéographiques et musiciens), de techniciens, de rédacteurs et de réviseurs de tous genres d'affaires. Ni Mediaspark, ni Fitzgerald Studios n'ont la taille voulue pour disposer de toutes ces compétences à l'intérieur. Toutefois, elles peuvent accéder à la plupart de ces ressources au moyen d'un réseau appelé MEDIA Fusion qui regroupe des professionnels de l'île du Cap-Breton et (de plus en plus) de la Nouvelle-Écosse continentale. MEDIA Fusion a reçu l'appui de l'APBECA et de la Nouvelle-Écosse, dans le cadre du Programme de COOPERATION. À Sydney, un nouveau projet est également en train de prendre forme : l'ancien palais de justice sera transformé en un centre d'innovation qui s'appellera Silicon Island Innovation Centre. Le centre pourra accueillir un certain nombre d'entreprises multimédias qui collaboreront le plus étroitement possible les unes avec les autres. Les gouvernements fédéral et provincial appuient la conversion de l'immeuble qui, on l'espère, devrait être prêt à être occupé d'ici la fin de 1998. Avant même le début des travaux de réfection, les responsables du centre avaient conclu une entente avec 22 futurs locataires. Lorsque le centre ouvrira ses portes, il sera déjà complet. D'autres noms sont inscrits sur une liste d'attente.

Exemple 3 : Le Centre canadien pour l'innovation dans le domaine des pêches (CCIP)

En 1989, une proposition avant-gardiste a aidé une industrie traditionnelle, fondée sur les ressources, à se moderniser.

La recherche [sur la façon de réduire le roulis à bord des navires de l'entreprise] nous a permis d'apporter des améliorations qui ont donné lieu à un produit de meilleure qualité. Notre saison de pêche est prolongée et nos navires peuvent rester en mer plus longtemps.

Rex Simmonds, président, AMP Fisheries et Simmonds Seafoods

Selon l'évaluation, le CCIP a contribué, au cours des quatre dernières années, pour une somme de 4,5 millions de dollars à des projets de R.-D., qui ont eu des retombées totales de 21,7 millions de dollars, soit près de 4 \$ pour chaque dollar investi.

- Le UCCB fournit des services techniques aux entreprises et à l'industrie, en bénéficiant du soutien prévu par un protocole d'entente avec la SECB.
- L'Information Technology Association of Nova Scotia compte 160 entreprises membres; elle a été établie grâce à des fonds de l'Entente de COOPÉRATION Canada - Nouvelle-Écosse sur la diversification économique.
- En 1994, l'Entente de COOPÉRATION Canada - Nouvelle-Écosse sur le développement technologique a fourni un soutien pour l'établissement de la Telecom Applications Research Alliance (TARA) (alliance pour la recherche sur les applications en télécommunications). TARA reçoit essentiellement du financement privé; le gouvernement n'a fourni que 27 p. 100 du financement pour les cinq premières années d'activité. TARA est toujours principalement établie en Nouvelle-Écosse, mais elle a commencé à attirer des membres d'autres provinces (Terre-Neuve, Nouveau-Brunswick, Québec et Ontario) intéressés par sa capacité de soutenir le développement de services et de produits fondés sur les télécommunications.

De nouvelles activités axées sur la technologie à l'île du Cap-Breton illustrent la diversification souhaitée de l'économie locale, longtemps associée à des industries en pleine maturité comme celles du charbon et de l'acier. De nouveaux secteurs de l'industrie du savoir y ont maintenant pris leur envol, surtout dans le domaine florissant des produits multimédias. Cette évolution est due non seulement aux compétences d'entrepreneurs locaux, mais également à leur souhait passionné de vivre et de travailler à l'île du Cap-Breton et nulle part ailleurs.

MediaSpark IT Solutions Inc. et Fitzgerald Studios sont deux entreprises représentatives des nouvelles tendances à l'île du Cap-Breton. MediaSpark a été fondée par Mathew Georgiou, qui avait initialement quitté l'île pour aller travailler au bureau de Toronto d'IBM Canada. En 1994, il est retourné au Cap-Breton parce qu'il envisageait d'être son propre patron et qu'il souhaitait y vivre. Grâce à l'aide de la SECB et de l'APÉCA, il a fondé MediaSpark, une entreprise qui fournit des services de programmation personnalisés, des services graphiques, des sites Web et d'autres produits logiciels à des clients de l'île du Cap-Breton, de la Nouvelle-Écosse continentale, d'autres parties du Canada et de 100 autres pays. MediaSpark fournit maintenant de l'emploi à sept personnes à Sydney.

La société Fitzgerald Studios a été fondée par un photographe professionnel, Owen Fitzgerald. L'entreprise s'est fait connaître en produisant des CD-ROM, L'un d'eux retrace l'histoire de la Foreresse-de-Louisbourg et un autre, la vie et les travaux d'Alexander Graham Bell. Le plus récent raconte l'histoire des Acadiens. L'APÉCA a appuyé la production du CD-ROM sur Louisbourg. Les produits multimédias représentent maintenant 90 p. 100 de la production de Fitzgerald Studios.

Lorsque je travaillais pour IBM Canada, à Toronto, et que j'envisageais de lancer ma propre entreprise, l'aide de l'APÉCA a été le facteur déterminant, non seulement de ma démarche initiale, mais également de ma décision de revenir à l'île du Cap-Breton. En outre, le soutien permanent des programmes de l'Agence a contribué à la croissance et à la réussite continues de notre entreprise.

Mathew Georgiou, président, MediaSpark IT Solutions Inc.

solides; cependant, le produit a été lancé trop rapidement. Il y a eu des problèmes de production; le marché n'était pas prêt pour le produit; enfin, les utilisateurs éventuels n'étaient pas équipés pour employer la nouvelle technologie. La réussite actuelle du projet est due, notamment, à la volonté du gouvernement de lui maintenir son appui et de préserver une partie du dur labeur qui lui avait déjà été consacré.

Le logiciel relatif au projet initial a été vendu à un entrepreneur local qui a obtenu la participation de nouveaux investisseurs (non gouvernementaux) et accru les activités de commercialisation. Par-dessus tout, le procédé est devenu plus complexe lorsque un des ingénieurs du projet a demandé l'aide de l'APÉCA afin d'élaborer une technologie permettant de découper la surface et le contour des lentilles de lunettes, et non pas uniquement des montures. On a cherché de nouveaux investisseurs privés (1,5 millions de dollars pour la R-D, la commercialisation et le fonds de roulement). On négocie actuellement des contrats d'une valeur de 67 millions de dollars et l'on prévoit des ventes d'environ 150 millions de dollars à la deuxième année d'exploitation. Quelques-uns des chercheurs initiaux travaillent toujours à l'entreprise. Ce type de société, fondée sur la technologie, est susceptible d'encourager d'autres entrepreneurs.

Nous tirons deux leçons de ce récit :

- La patience – il a fallu attendre dix ans, et surmonter notamment une faillite en cours de route, avant que le projet ne donne des résultats.
- La diversité de l'effort – il faut trouver des investisseurs, et une commercialisation efficace doit accompagner les nouveaux produits technologiques.

Exemple 2 : Industries du savoir en Nouvelle-Écosse

Les industries du savoir commencent à prendre de l'expansion en Nouvelle-Écosse; elles font appel à de nouvelles compétences en technologie et favorisent la diversification des économies locales.

Le secteur de la technologie de l'information de la Nouvelle-Écosse a connu une croissance rapide. À l'heure actuelle, il compte quelque 300 entreprises. Une étude récente du University College of Cape Breton (UCCB) révèle la présence d'une vaste gamme de compétences dans la région, y compris en analyse de systèmes et en programmation⁴. Il s'agit d'un avantage concurrentiel dans un secteur où les travailleurs qualifiés font cruellement défaut, et ce, dans toute l'Amérique du Nord.

Les alliances et les partenariats ont évolué grâce à l'appui de l'APÉCA et de la Société d'expansion du Cap-Breton (SECB), par exemple :

- Le groupe consultatif de la technologie est essentiellement un « réseau » qui permet aux professionnels de la TI de rester en contact entre eux.

1) Aider les entreprises à innover

Rien n'illustre mieux les avantages à tirer du partage de risques entre le gouvernement et le secteur privé que la réalisation d'un projet novateur qui entraîne des risques élevés, mais dont la réussite peut avoir des avantages économiques considérables. Les données de Statistique Canada montrent la contribution possible de l'APBCA à des activités novatrices d'entreprises. Entre 1993 et 1995, parmi les entreprises recevant un soutien à l'innovation de l'APBCA, on a constaté une augmentation de 14 p. 100 des dépenses moyennes de R-D¹, par rapport à un déclin de 30 p. 100 pour l'ensemble des entreprises qui déclarent des activités de R-D².

En 1997, un examen de projets d'innovation de l'APBCA a permis d'estimer qu'un peu plus de la moitié des projets aidés réussissaient ou présentaient des possibilités de réussite. Cependant, les avantages étaient supérieurs aux risques car les projets fructueux entraînaient une augmentation du revenu régional qui équivalait à 4,5 fois le coût de tous les projets, y compris ceux qui ont échoué³.

Exemple 1 : Leçons essentielles tirées du processus d'innovation

La longue démarche de commercialisation
Lorsqu'on crée un nouveau produit commercial, le processus est jalonné d'incertitudes pouvant aller jusqu'à la faillite. Dans le cas de projets d'innovation en particulier, on retrouve des risques élevés et il faut souvent attendre longtemps les résultats.

des fondés sur la technologie, de même que les écueils en chemin,
Le soutien gouvernemental relatif à ce processus comprend souvent non seulement une aide financière, mais également un appui important de nature plus personnelle, y compris des conseils techniques, de l'encouragement et des rappels de la réalité. Ces services peuvent exiger plus de temps que les formes habituelles de soutien aux entreprises et une capacité technique plus grande de la part des employés affectés à un projet.

variés.

et des partenaires
On trouve un exemple de ce processus à Moncton. Au milieu des années 1980, un optométriste-entrepreneur s'est adressé à un institut de recherche appuyé par le gouvernement fédéral (et maintenant par l'APBCA) et rattaché à l'Université de Moncton, afin de lui proposer un procédé électronique permettant de fabriquer des montures de lunettes. Un dispositif de lecture mesurerait le contour des montures et la transmettrait électroniquement les mesures à une machine coupense. Le dispositif de lecture et la machine pourraient être situés dans une même pièce ou dans des villes différentes, la distance n'ayant pas d'importance.

Le projet a mené à l'établissement, à Moncton, d'un des laboratoires voués à la fabrication d'équipement optique les plus perfectionnés du monde; 40 personnes hautement spécialisées y travaillent et 110 nouveaux emplois pourraient être créés au cours des 12 prochains mois. Toutefois, le projet initial avait échoué à la fin des années 1980. La recherche et les idées étaient

innovation, technologie et perfectionnement des compétences

L'économie de la région de l'Atlantique est traditionnellement fondée sur l'extraction et la transformation de ressources. Des industries comme l'exploitation forestière, la transformation des aliments et l'extraction des minéraux demeurent importantes; toutefois, en proportion, elles ont connu une croissance lente, voire, un déclin. Ces tendances devraient se poursuivre. En même temps, les secteurs de l'industrie du savoir, comme la technologie de l'information (TI) et la biotechnologie, ont connu une croissance rapide dans le monde entier. Ces secteurs doivent faire partie intégrante de l'économie du Canada atlantique à titre de secteurs de croissance à part entière, afin de permettre aux PME de la région de demeurer concurrentielles et de prendre de l'expansion.

Au Canada atlantique, l'établissement de secteurs de l'industrie du savoir repose sur des fondements solides. On y trouve une infrastructure valable composée d'universités et de diverses installations de recherche; toutefois, les liens entre cette capacité et les besoins de l'industrie et du marché ne sont pas aussi efficaces qu'ils pourraient l'être. En termes proportionnels, le système d'éducation de la région produit un plus grand nombre de diplômés en génie et en sciences que les autres régions du Canada. L'aide aux industries et aux entreprises permet d'éviter que les travailleurs quittent la région pour trouver un emploi.

En contrepartie de ces avantages, le Canada atlantique souffre d'une pénurie de gestionnaires, de professionnels et de techniciens d'expérience. Pour combler cette pénurie, la région doit trouver les compétences nécessaires à l'extérieur, ou encore former un plus grand nombre de résidents de la région et les garder sur place. De plus, on trouve peu de « grappes » industrielles importantes dans la région. On doit renforcer celles qui existent et en créer de nouvelles en établissant des alliances entre les entreprises, les gouvernements, les universités et d'autres établissements.

L'APECA appuie l'innovation et la technologie surtout en aidant les PME à accroître leur productivité et leur diversité technologique, notamment par l'élaboration et la commercialisation de nouveaux produits ou procédés, la formation, le recrutement et le maintien en place des travailleurs spécialisés, la diffusion de technologie et la stimulation de la croissance des grappes industrielles. Pour y parvenir, l'APECA et ses partenaires utilisent plusieurs moyens, notamment :

1. Aider les entreprises à innover;
2. Aider les travailleurs à acquérir des compétences techniques;
3. Aider les gens à comprendre et à utiliser la technologie et la science;
4. Aider à établir des alliances et des partenariats pour le développement de la technologie.

Notre système d'éducation doit favoriser l'acquisition du jugement et des compétences dont nos citoyens ont besoin pour gérer la quantité énorme d'information à laquelle ils ont accès... La nouvelle définition de l'alphabétisme dans notre société doit comprendre la capacité d'utiliser des ordinateurs afin d'accéder à l'information et de créer une base de connaissances adaptée au XXI^e siècle.

L'Honorable John Manley, ministre de l'Industrie

Dans la présente partie, nous passons en revue les progrès et les réalisations de l'APECA en matière de développement économique du Canada atlantique et de mise en oeuvre des priorités stratégiques du gouvernement fédéral, qui sont énoncées à la partie I. L'APECA a appris à collaborer avec les autres intervenants qui participent à des efforts locaux et régionaux de développement économique. La présente partie contient des exemples qui illustrent ce type de partenariat et les responsabilités croissantes des partenaires en matière de développement économique. Dans le cadre de cette démarche générale, l'APECA peut jouer un rôle de coordonnateur principal. Elle peut également avoir la responsabilité première de la mise en oeuvre d'un programme ou d'un projet, partager cette responsabilité avec d'autres partenaires ou simplement se joindre à plusieurs autres intervenants.

Les chapitres de la partie II sont :

- Innovation, technologie et perfectionnement des compétences
- Développement des petites entreprises
- Entrepreneurship
- Tourisme
- Commerce
- Développement économique des collectivités
- L'APECA à titre d'agent d'exécution de programmes fédéraux
- Projets de recherche et d'analyse de politiques

Même si les exemples peuvent être classés sous l'une de ces rubriques, les répercussions d'un projet ou d'un programme ne sont pas nécessairement limitées à cette priorité ou à ce thème. Les répercussions multidimensionnelles sont l'une des caractéristiques des activités de l'APECA. L'aide fournie à une entreprise au sein d'une collectivité constitue un soutien non seulement pour l'entreprise, mais également pour la collectivité où elle se trouve. Lorsqu'on aide les gens à accéder aux technologies modernes et à en comprendre le fonctionnement, non seulement on aide des particuliers et des familles, mais on fait également un investissement dans des industries et des collectivités.

Depenses totales de l'Agence : 325,8 millions de dollars

Figure 4 - Dépenses de l'APÉCA pour 1997-1998

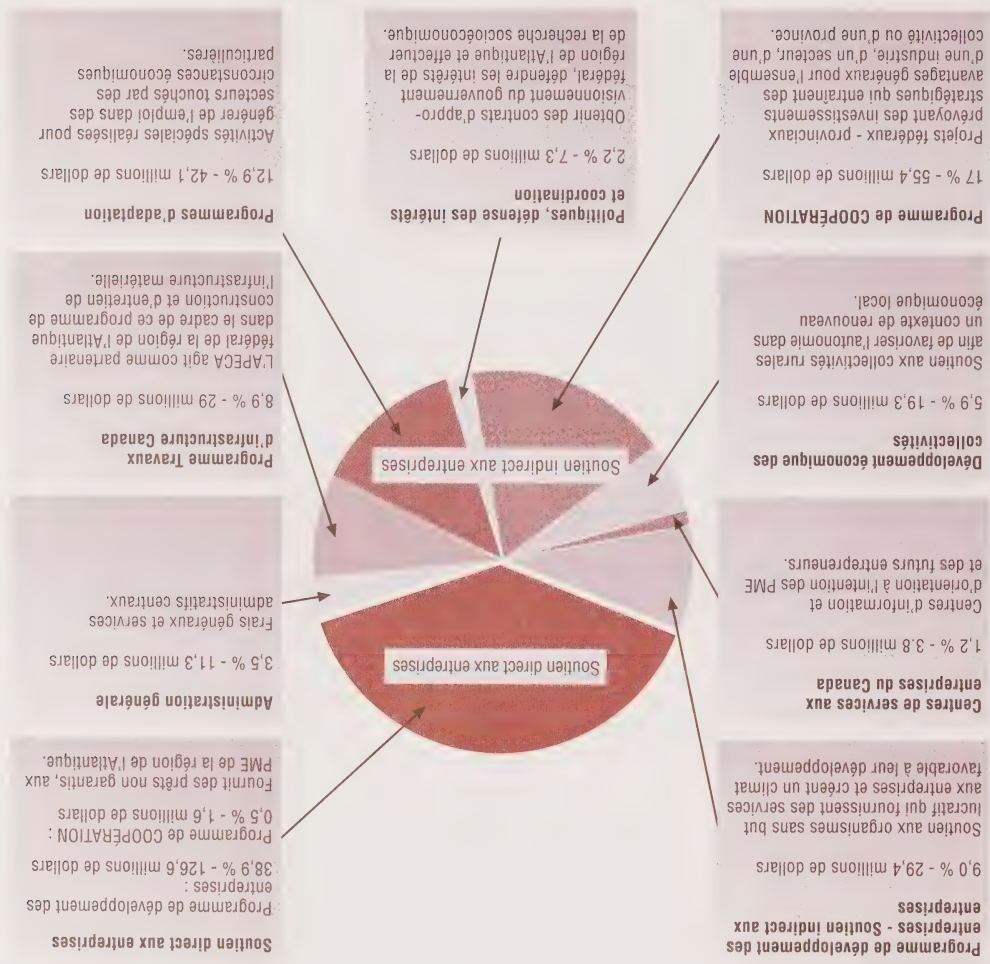


Figure 3 - Agence de promotion économique du Canada Atlantique
De 1993-1994 à 1997-1998 (EN MILLIONS DE DOLLARS)

Activités / Gamme de services										
1993-1994 1994-1995 1995-1996 1996-1997 1997-1998 Total										
Développement	Programmes de base	138,5	135,8	146,7	126,8	156,0	703,8	14,3	3,8	14,3
	Développement des entreprises	1,3	2,1	3,3	3,8	3,8	14,3	14,3	14,3	14,3
	Centres de services aux entreprises du Canada	1,3	2,1	3,3	3,8	3,8	14,3	14,3	14,3	14,3
	Développement des collectivités	91,5	100,2	89,3	78,5	57,0	416,5	416,5	416,5	416,5
	Programme de COOPÉRATION	5,8	6,2	6,7	6,7	7,3	32,7	32,7	32,7	32,7
	Politiques, défense des intérêts et coordination	237,1	244,3	255,1	233,3	243,4	1 213,2	1 213,2	1 213,2	1 213,2
	Total - Programmes de base	237,1	244,3	255,1	233,3	243,4	1 213,2	1 213,2	1 213,2	1 213,2
	Programmes secondaires	24,0	25,2	8,6	1,6	0,7	60,1	60,1	60,1	60,1
	Diversi-pêches	0,7	1,1	2,5	1,3	5,6	161,7	161,7	161,7	161,7
	Mesures d'adaptation	2,5	5,6	17,3	8,8	20,9	31,1	31,1	31,1	31,1
Infrastructure	LSPA - Développement économique des coll.	2,5	5,6	17,3	8,8	20,9	31,1	31,1	31,1	31,1
	LSPA - Renouveau économique	0,7	1,1	2,5	1,3	5,6	161,7	161,7	161,7	161,7
	Fermeture de bases/Stemon Park Corporation	0,7	1,1	2,5	1,3	5,6	161,7	161,7	161,7	161,7
	Programme de redéveloppement du Lien fixe	0,7	1,1	2,5	1,3	5,6	161,7	161,7	161,7	161,7
	Bishop Falls	0,7	1,1	2,5	1,3	5,6	161,7	161,7	161,7	161,7
	Total - Programmes d'adaptation	27,2	31,9	31,0	29,5	42,1	161,7	161,7	161,7	161,7
	Programme Travaux d'infrastructure Canada	59,0	70,6	38,0	29,0	196,6	196,6	196,6	196,6	196,6
	Total - Programmes secondaires	27,2	90,9	101,6	67,5	71,1	358,3	358,3	358,3	358,3
	Total - Développement	264,3	335,2	356,7	300,8	314,5	1 571,5	1 571,5	1 571,5	1 571,5
	Administration générale	11,4	12,0	11,6	11,0	11,3	57,3	57,3	57,3	57,3
DÉPENSES TOTALES DE L'AGENCE										
Transfert aux AMG - COOPÉRATION										
Transfert aux AMG - Autres (1)										
Total - Fonds de l'APECA utilisés										

(1) Les transferts à d'autres ministères du gouvernement (AMG) illustrent le rôle de l'APECA en matière de coordination. Des fonds ont été transférés afin de compléter le financement de programmes des AMG lorsqu'on a estimé que cette démarche constituait la meilleure façon d'atteindre des objectifs de développement régional.

Ressources

L'APÉCA est un petit organisme qui, au cours de l'exercice 1997-1998, était doté d'un effectif de 371 personnes. Les programmes de base de l'Agence (essentiellement le Programme de développement des entreprises, le programme de COOPÉRATION et le développement économique des collectivités) absorbent plus des deux tiers des dépenses en matière de programmes. Le reste des dépenses est affecté à des programmes secondaires. La plupart des activités secondaires sont des programmes que l'Agence exécute au nom d'autres ministères fédéraux. Ces programmes sont habituellement conçus pour viser des secteurs difficiles particuliers de l'économie nationale et/ou régionale. Ce sont, par exemple, les composantes de développement économique des collectivités et de renouveau économique de La stratégie du poisson de fond de l'Atlantique, les programmes liés à la fermeture de bases, le programme Travaux d'infrastructure Canada et le Programme de redéveloppement du Lien fixe.

Comme on peut le constater à la figure 3, au cours de la période de cinq ans allant de 1993-1994 à 1997-1998, l'APÉCA a consacré aux programmes de base (soit l'ensemble des programmes de base plus les transferts à d'autres ministères du gouvernement (AMG) aux chapitres du Programme de COOPÉRATION et Autres) des dépenses de 1 603,9 millions de dollars, soit une moyenne de 321 millions de dollars par année. Par comparaison, au cours de la première période quinquennale (soit de 1988-1989 à 1992-1993), l'APÉCA a consacré en moyenne 357 millions de dollars par année aux programmes de base.

De 1993-1994 à 1997-1998, les dépenses de l'Agence destinées aux programmes secondaires se sont élevées à 358 millions de dollars, soit une moyenne annuelle de 72 millions de dollars, comparativement à 12 millions de dollars par année de 1988-1989 à 1992-1993.

Figure 2 - Mandat, priorités et gamme de services de l'APÉCA

Mandat

Mandat prévu par la Loi
« Favoriser les possibilités de développement économique du Canada atlantique et, plus particulièrement, la croissance des revenus et les créations d'emplois dans cette région. »

Priorités stratégiques

Développement de l'entrepreneuriat

Le soutien aux entrepreneurs établis et aux aspirants entrepreneurs mène à la création continue d'emplois grâce au démarrage et à l'agrandissement d'entreprises.

Tourisme

Les PME du secteur du tourisme doivent accéder à de nouveaux marchés et concevoir de nouveaux produits afin de tirer avantage des tendances mondiales en tourisme.

Commerce

Tirer avantage des nouveaux marchés d'exportation signifie que les PME continuent à générer des emplois et à promouvoir la croissance économique.

Innovation et technologie

Les investissements dans la recherche technologique et dans le perfectionnement des compétences permettent aux PME de profiter de l'« économie du savoir ».

Accès aux capitaux et à l'information

Afin de démarrer ou de prendre de l'expansion, les PME ont besoin de capitaux et de renseignements qui sont souvent difficiles à obtenir pour les petites entreprises.

Pratiques de gestion commerciale

Améliorer les compétences en gestion des PME afin d'augmenter les taux de survie, de croissance et de productivité.

Gamme de services

La gamme de services de l'APÉCA désigne les programmes au moyen desquels l'Agence met en œuvre ses priorités stratégiques.

Services de base :

Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE) :

Principal mécanisme utilisé par l'Agence pour fournir un soutien financier direct aux PME, le PDE offre un accès à des capitaux, sous forme de prêts non garantis. De plus, il fournit un soutien financier aux organismes sans but lucratif qui aident les entreprises de la région de l'Atlantique.

Centres de services aux entreprises du Canada (CSEC) :

Ces quatre centres provinciaux fournissent l'accès à de l'information et à des conseils aux PME et aux aspirants entrepreneurs.

Développement économique des collectivités (DEC) :

Ce programme permet de relever des défis uniques en matière de développement des collectivités et favorise l'autonomie des localités en matière de renouvellement économique.

Programme de coopération :

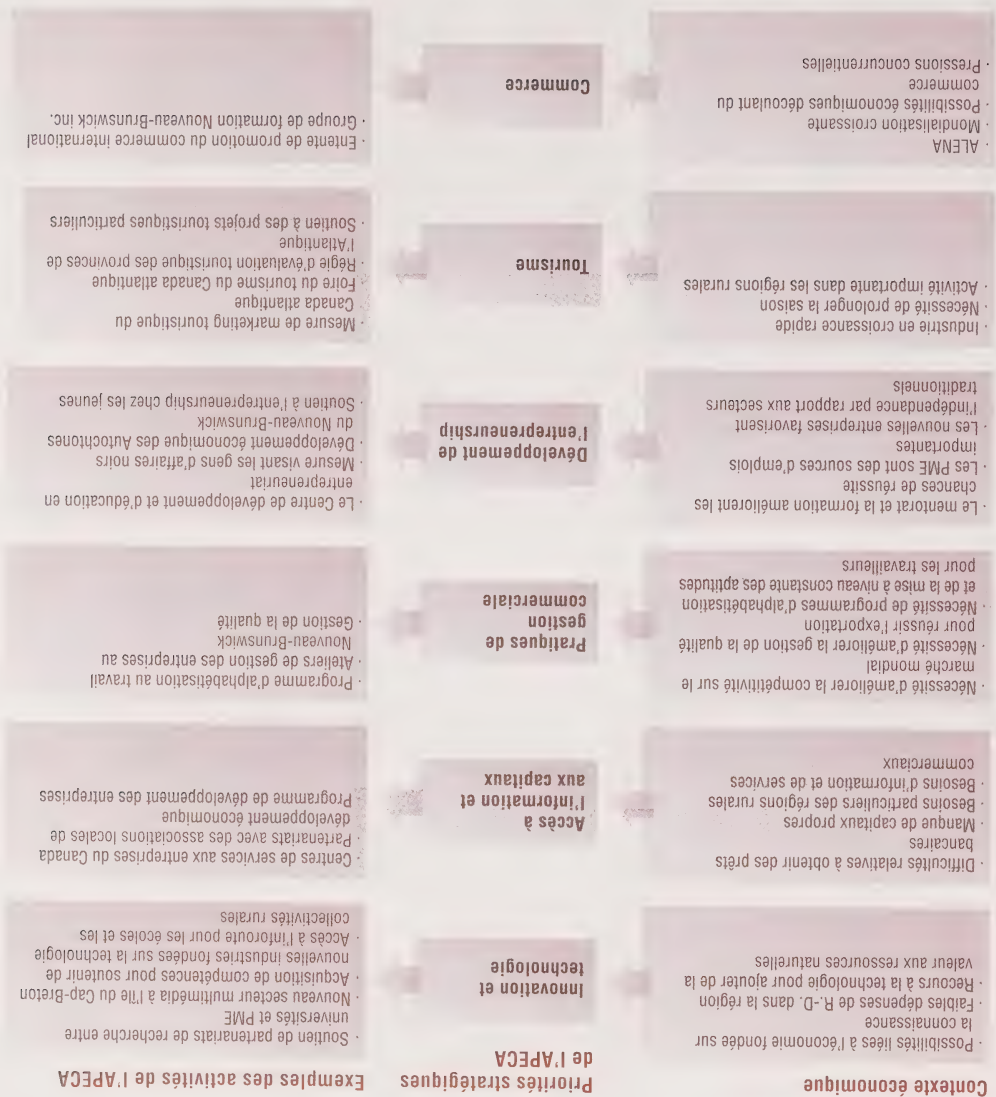
Il s'agit du programme principal pour les projets fédéraux-provinciaux. Les ententes portent sur des investissements stratégiques qui profitent à l'ensemble d'une industrie, d'un secteur, d'une collectivité ou d'une province.

Services secondaires :

L'Agence s'efforce d'obtenir des contrats d'approvisionnement du gouvernement fédéral; elle défend les intérêts de la région de l'Atlantique au moment de l'élaboration des politiques fédérales et réalise un programme ciblé de recherche en politique socioéconomique.

- Des activités d'adaptation à la fermeture de bases pour favoriser la diversification économique et la création d'emplois.
- La composante de développement économique des collectivités de la stratégie du poisson de fond de l'Atlantique (LSPA).
- La création d'emplois au moyen du Programme de redéveloppement du Lien fixe.
- Mise en œuvre du programme Travaux d'infrastructure.

Figure 1 - L'économie mondiale et les priorités de l'APECA



s'agit de la première tentative d'une région d'utiliser des modèles internationaux afin d'évaluer sa propre compétitivité économique dans un cadre international.

Priorités stratégiques

La figure 1 montre que les priorités stratégiques de l'APÉCA représentent des secteurs cruciaux pour le développement économique du Canada atlantique. Ces priorités illustrent les besoins des entrepreneurs de la région de l'Atlantique; elles portent sur des tendances économiques importantes et appuient les priorités du portefeuille de l'Industrie.

Gammes de services

Les gammes de services de l'APÉCA sont les liens entre les priorités stratégiques et les clients. Ce sont les programmes courants au moyen desquels l'Agence exécute son mandat. La figure 2 illustre les liens entre le mandat, les priorités stratégiques et les gammes de services, regroupés en fonction d'activités de base et d'activités secondaires.

Le thème principal du programme de recherche sur la politique économique a été la compétitivité de l'économie du Canada atlantique. Le programme a commencé par un vaste processus de comparaison de la compétitivité de la région en fonction des normes internationales et des courants de pensée actuels en matière d'économie. Les initiatives lancées en 1995, ont mené à des rapports d'études achevés et publiés en 1996 et en 1997. Selon des représentants de l'OCDE et du Forum économique mondial de Davos, en Suisse, il

Le secteur de l'économie, les associations industrielles et les entreprises, partenaires régionaux, y compris des organismes voués à la politique publique, les universités, interêts et l'engagement des intervenants régionaux, au moyen d'un réseau en expansion de la région de l'Atlantique et des considérations propres aux secteurs. La démarche optimise les provinciales et locales, des possibilités et des défis structurels que présente l'économie de la de l'Industrie. De plus, ce plan tient compte de nouvelles questions économiques régionales, fédérales ainsi que des priorités et les programmes de l'Agence et du portefeuille

Aujourd'hui, le programme d'élaboration de politiques et de recherche de l'APÉCA comprend des activités de recherche appuyées par des ressources internes ainsi que des travaux de recherche exécutés par des partenaires externes ou avec leur concours. La recherche porte sur une gamme de sujets économiques et socioéconomiques. Le plan de recherche tient compte des principales politiques

En conformité avec le mandat qui lui est attribué par la loi, à savoir veiller aux intérêts du Canada atlantique dans la formulation de la politique fédérale, et de faciliter la coordination des efforts de développement du gouvernement fédéral dans la région, l'APÉCA a maintenu une capacité de base en matière de recherche économique, à l'appui de l'élaboration de programmes, de l'analyse de politiques et de conseils au sujet des grandes tendances qui touchent l'économie de la région. Au cours de la période de cinq ans visée par le présent rapport, le travail de recherche de l'Agence en matière de politique a connu une évolution importante grâce à l'élaboration d'une orientation plus stratégique, au recours à des partenaires externes dans le cadre de l'élaboration de politiques et, enfin, à l'adoption d'une démarche proactive visant à diffuser les résultats de la recherche aux principaux intervenants et au grand public.

Recherche en matière de politique économique

- Le comité d'harmonisation fédéral-provincial. Ce comité, présidé par le président de l'APÉCA, est composé de sous-ministres provinciaux du Développement économique et des Affaires intergouvernementales. Il assure l'échange d'information et la coordination de programmes et d'activités économiques fédéraux et provinciaux dans la région. À ce jour, les principales réalisations de ce comité comprennent plusieurs initiatives clés comme l'Entente sur la promotion du commerce extérieur et le Partenariat de l'Industrie touristique du Canada atlantique.

l'échelle du Canada atlantique afin qu'ils établissent un programme économique commun et partagé pour l'ensemble de la région. L'Agence a travaillé activement à l'élaboration de partenariats forts et harmonisés, qui servent de fondement au développement économique régional. En voici un exemple important :

Le résultat d'un programme de compétitivité est l'exercice le plus important d'analyse comparative accompli à ce jour à l'égard d'une région du Canada

*Jim McNiven,
School of Management,
Université Dalhousie*

Chapitre 2

Comment l'APÉCA exécute son mandat

Pour remplir son mandat, l'APÉCA exécute deux activités distinctes :

1. Veiller à ce qu'un large éventail d'instruments et de ressources liés au développement des entreprises réponde aux divers besoins des entrepreneurs établis ou nouveaux.
2. Veiller à ce que tous les programmes et les activités de développement économique au Canada atlantique soient conçus et coordonnés de manière à améliorer le climat des affaires en général.

Partenariats

Mission

Favoriser, dans une association avec la population du Canada atlantique, le développement économique à long terme de la région.

Afin d'exécuter son mandat d'accroître les possibilités de développement économique au Canada atlantique, l'APÉCA est dotée d'un énoncé de mission qui adhère au principe du partenariat.

L'Agence a implanté un important réseau, y compris les structures nécessaires, afin de remplir son mandat. Au gouvernement fédéral, l'Agence a établi des ententes de partenariat avec d'autres membres du portefeuille de l'Industrie, comme le Conseil national de recherches du Canada, l'Agence spatiale canadienne et la Banque de développement du Canada, afin que les activités de soutien aux PME se complètent et se renforcent les unes les autres.

Dans le secteur privé, l'APÉCA traite directement avec des cadres d'entreprises, des associations industrielles, des organisations commerciales et communautaires, des établissements de recherche et la collectivité de l'enseignement. Le ministre responsable de l'APÉCA, le secrétaire d'État et le personnel de l'Agence communiquent directement, tous les jours, avec des dirigeants politiques et des cadres supérieurs d'administrations provinciales et locales. Dans chaque province, les vice-présidents régionaux de l'APÉCA agissent comme présidents de conseils fédéraux ou jouent un rôle important dans leur coordination. Ces conseils offrent aux chefs de ministères fédéraux dans la région une tribune où ils peuvent échanger des renseignements et coordonner des programmes et des politiques.

À titre d'exemple de forme particulière de partenariat, nous pouvons souligner les activités de l'APÉCA à l'appui du développement économique des minorités de langues officielles au Canada atlantique. Dans le cadre de son engagement à mettre en oeuvre l'article 41 de la partie VII de la *Loi sur les langues officielles*, l'APÉCA collabore avec des intervenants économiques essentiels et joue un rôle de premier plan dans les activités de développement économique des collectivités afin d'aider le gouvernement fédéral à respecter ses obligations en matière de protection et de promotion des minorités de langues officielles, où qu'elles se trouvent. Le Commissaire aux langues officielles a reconnu les efforts de l'Agence en l'inscrivant au tableau d'honneur de 1996 pour sa contribution au développement des collectivités de langue minoritaire.

Le Canada atlantique compte quatre gouvernements provinciaux et une population très dispersée, ce qui entraîne la nécessité d'une meilleure coordination des efforts à l'échelle de la région. L'APÉCA est le seul intervenant qui peut rejoindre et regrouper les dirigeants régionaux à

de plus, il a renforcé la capacité de l'APÉCA de faire valoir efficacement les besoins de la région. Le mandat du Portefeuille tient compte des priorités fédérales. Ces dernières mettent l'accent sur le développement des PME, le commerce et les investissements étrangers, la technologie et l'innovation et, enfin, l'emploi des jeunes; elles correspondent donc aux priorités de l'APÉCA.

1997-1998 – Importance renouvelée de l'aménagement rural

Le gouvernement fédéral a reconnu que le développement des collectivités est un processus ascendant et que les Canadiens des régions rurales sont les mieux placés pour élaborer leurs propres stratégies de développement. Afin de concrétiser la priorité accordée au renouvellement rural, le gouvernement fédéral a approuvé, en 1997, un concept de programme canadien de diversification du revenu de l'entre-prise agricole, d'une portée intergouvernementale. Ce programme est dirigé par le ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Agroalimentaire.

L'APÉCA a dirigé l'exécution du programme au Canada atlantique en assurant la coordination d'une équipe formée de représentants de ministères fédéraux afin d'aider les

collectivités rurales à profiter pleinement des possibilités de développement économique. C'est un rôle évident pour l'Agence dans une région où 49 p. 100 de la population vit en milieu rural, par rapport à 23 p. 100 pour l'ensemble du pays¹. Dans le cadre de son soutien au développement économique des collectivités, l'Agence a pris des mesures afin de relever les défis particuliers auxquels font face les Canadiens des régions rurales en ce qui concerne le développement de leur économie.

Lorsqu'on a créé l'APÉCA, en 1987, on estimait notamment qu'un organisme plus petit et axé sur la région serait mieux placé pour s'adapter et réagir aux besoins régionaux. Les restrictions financières du gouvernement fédéral et l'évolution des conditions économiques ont constitué des défis pour l'Agence. Toutefois, elles lui ont également offert la possibilité de revoir et de renforcer sa démarche générale afin de remplir son mandat d'une manière plus efficace.

Le gouvernement... redoublera d'efforts afin que les communautés rurales et toutes les régions du Canada profitent des avantages de l'économie mondiale fondée sur le savoir.

Discours du Trône, ouverture du 36^e Parlement, 1997.

Depuis le début de 1996, l'Agence fait partie du portefeuille de l'Industrie, constitué de 13 ministères et organismes qui relèvent du Parlement par l'intermédiaire du ministre de l'Industrie. Ce changement a entraîné une plus grande coordination parmi les organismes qui s'occupent de développement régional et entre ceux-ci et les autres ministères et organismes du portefeuille;

1996 – L'APÉCA est intégrée au portefeuille de l'Industrie

Le gouvernement fédéral a eu de plus en plus recours aux compétences et aux relations de l'APÉCA concernant la région pour assurer l'exécution de programmes, notamment la composition de développement économique des collectivités de La stratégie du poisson de fond de l'Atlantique (LSPA), le programme Travaux d'infrastructure Canada dans la région et le programme Développement des collectivités.

L'Atlantique (LSPA), le programme Travaux d'infrastructure Canada dans la région et le programme Développement des collectivités de La stratégie du poisson de fond de l'Atlantique. À l'aide de numéros sans frais, de télécopieurs et d'Internet, les CSCFC permettent aux PME d'accéder à des renseignements sur les services offerts par 28 ministères fédéraux, les administrations provinciales et municipales et le secteur privé. Les CSCFC sont devenus des liens importants pour les partenaires de l'APÉCA dans le développement économique.

avec des organisations de développement économique des collectivités, le réseau des CSCFC est accessible, grâce à la technologie d'Internet, à un total de 105 intermédiaires existants de la région de l'Atlantique. À l'aide de numéros sans frais, de télécopieurs et d'Internet, les CSCFC permettent aux PME d'accéder à des renseignements sur les services offerts par 28 ministères fédéraux, les administrations provinciales et municipales et le secteur privé. Les CSCFC sont devenus des liens importants pour les partenaires de l'APÉCA dans le développement économique.

d'information des Centres de services aux entreprises du Canada (CSEC) pour les collectivités situées à l'extérieur des localités où se trouvent actuellement les CSCFC. Au moyen de partenariats avec des organisations de développement économique des collectivités, le réseau des CSCFC est accessible, grâce à la technologie d'Internet, à un total de 105 intermédiaires existants de la région de l'Atlantique. À l'aide de numéros sans frais, de télécopieurs et d'Internet, les CSCFC permettent aux PME d'accéder à des renseignements sur les services offerts par 28 ministères fédéraux, les administrations provinciales et municipales et le secteur privé. Les CSCFC sont devenus des liens importants pour les partenaires de l'APÉCA dans le développement économique.

atlantique pour tous les programmes fédéraux destinés aux petites entreprises. À titre de

Dans le budget fédéral de 1995, on désignait l'APÉCA comme « guichet unique » au Canada

1995 – Le budget fédéral : L'APÉCA en tant que « guichet unique »

collaborer avec les collectivités touchées afin de les aider à rétablir les bases de l'économie locale. certain nombre de bases des Forces canadiennes au Canada atlantique. On a chargé l'APÉCA de Au ministère de la Défense nationale, l'examen des programmes a entraîné la fermeture d'un

Chaque entente porte sur un certain nombre de facettes du développement qui correspondent aux priorités stratégiques de l'Agence et qui mettent l'accent sur le développement rural et communautaire. Les ententes uniques remplacent plus de 50 ententes antérieures qui portaient sur une vaste gamme de secteurs de développement; elles permettent donc de diminuer les coûts de fonctionnement.

Terre-Neuve adopte la même démarche au fur et à mesure qu'expiront les ententes existantes. d'une portée générale au Nouveau-Brunswick, en Nouvelle-Écosse et à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. Les ententes fédérales-provinciales de COOPÉRATION ont été regroupées en ententes uniques

Ratio avantages-coûts, mesures du soutien



On mesure les coûts-avantages en fonction de l'augmentation du PIB de la région de l'Atlantique pour chaque dollar de fonds publics et privés consacrés au projet.

SOURCE : Analyse effectuée par l'APÉCA en fonction des évaluations du Programme de COOPÉRATION de l'Agence (Coopers and Lybrand, février 1994) et de l'Enquête sur les petites et moyennes entreprises, 1995 et 1997, de Statistique Canada.

prorité des principales activités. À l'APÉCA, les examens ont donné lieu à un processus complet d'évaluation interne des programmes et d'établissement de priorités visant à améliorer l'efficacité de l'organisation.

Afin d'améliorer le service à la clientèle commerciale et d'offrir un service plus uniforme dans toute la région, l'Agence a entrepris l'élaboration d'un programme d'aide aux entreprises unique et plus souple. En 1995, le Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE) a remplacé les programmes Action et Diversi-pêches. De plus, le Programme de COOPÉRATION a été davantage axé sur les investissements qui profitent à une industrie, un secteur ou une collectivité. Selon cette démarche plus souple, le soutien direct aux entreprises a pris la forme de prêts sans intérêt entièrement remboursables. On a continué à mettre l'accent sur la fabrication et les services aux entreprises; de plus, on a accordé une importance nouvelle à l'industrie du savoir et la technologie ainsi que qu'aux entreprises qui cherchent à élaborer de nouveaux produits ou services ou qui se préparent en vue d'exporter. Cette démarche a mis davantage l'accent sur la viabilité économique à long terme des clients de l'APÉCA.

Maintenant, la région dépend moins des dépenses fédérales. Pour l'ensemble du Canada atlantique, entre 1980 et 1995, la dépendance nette à l'égard des dépenses fédérales a baissé de 40 p. 100 à 20 p. 100 du PIB. En 1996, les dépenses de l'APÉCA représentaient 1,5 p. 100 de l'ensemble des dépenses fédérales.

L'Agence a axé ses efforts sur des activités qui permettent d'optimiser les ressources. Le graphique ci-contre (fondé sur des évaluations externes) révèle que le soutien accordé aux PME a produit le plus fort ratio avantages-coûts, soit 5:1, ce qui est 25 fois plus efficace que les transferts aux particuliers. L'Agence a continué à renforcer les initiatives qui rendent les PME plus compétitives. Elle fournit un soutien en matière de mise en valeur des ressources et d'infrastructure uniquement si elle reçoit des fonds supplémentaires à cette fin. On a éliminé une forme antérieure de soutien, soit le Programme d'assurance-prêt. Même si ce dernier a donné des résultats positifs (soit un ratio avantages-coûts de 2:1), il était moins rentable que le soutien direct aux PME.

Le contexte de 1993-1998

Depuis 1993, l'APÉCA a évolué en réaction à un certain nombre de facteurs. Par exemple, la démarche fédérale en matière de développement économique a été plus ciblée et rentable. De plus, au cours d'une décennie de travail au Canada atlantique, l'Agence a appris et mis en pratique de nombreuses leçons. Des circonstances économiques externes ont également favorisé le changement. L'APÉCA doit constamment adapter ses programmes afin qu'ils aident les entreprises et les collectivités de la région de l'Atlantique à tirer avantage de l'évolution de l'économie mondiale.

Le présent chapitre fournit une chronologie de l'évolution de l'APÉCA depuis 1993 ainsi qu'une description des facteurs qui ont entraîné les changements.

1993 – Une nouvelle démarche du gouvernement fédéral

La deuxième période de cinq ans de l'APÉCA a commencé au moment de l'élection d'un nouveau gouvernement fédéral. Le document de politique intitulé Pour la création d'emplois, pour la relance économique (le Livre rouge) portait sur les priorités du nouveau gouvernement en matière de développement économique régional; on y faisait état de la nécessité de s'adapter aux exigences particulières des collectivités où sont prises les décisions d'affaires. En outre, on y soulignait qu'une économie nationale forte repose sur des économies régionales solides. Le soutien au programme Développement économique des collectivités (DEC) a permis à l'APÉCA de consacrer davantage d'efforts à des moyens d'aider les collectivités à prendre plus de responsabilités à l'égard de leur propre développement économique.

- Priorités stratégiques de l'Agence :
- Innovation et technologie
- Accès au capital et à l'information
- Pratiques de gestion commerciale
- Développement de l'entrepreneuriat
- Tourisme
- Commerce

À cette fin, l'Agence collabore avec les collectivités afin d'aider à organiser des groupes locaux, à cerner les ressources locales et à établir des liens entre les collectivités et des ressources provenant des provinces et d'autres ministères fédéraux. L'APÉCA a également établi des partenariats avec des organismes communautaires afin de fournir des programmes de développement aux petites entreprises dans des secteurs qui complétaient ses propres programmes d'aide. Ainsi, les programmes de l'APÉCA sont conformes aux priorités des collectivités et exécutés de façon rentable. Les priorités de l'Agence correspondent bien aux thèmes du développement économique énoncés dans Pour la création d'emplois, pour la relance économique. Les similitudes comportent notamment l'accent mis sur le rôle crucial des PME en matière de développement, la nécessité de favoriser l'entrepreneuriat, la démarche régionale relative au développement économique et, enfin, sur le devoir du gouvernement de chercher d'une manière créative, mais sérieuse, à améliorer l'accès au capital pour les PME.

1994 et 1995 - Examen des programmes

On a effectué un examen des programmes en deux étapes dans tous les ministères et organismes fédéraux, afin de rationaliser le fonctionnement et d'établir l'ordre de

Responsabilisation

L'APBCA est la seule, parmi les organismes et les ministères fédéraux chargés du développement économique, à être tenue par la loi de présenter un rapport quinquennal au Parlement, qui rend compte des réalisations découlant de toutes ses activités. L'élaboration des outils nécessaires a constitué une priorité de l'Agence.

Cette démarche est représentative de l'importance accrue accordée par le gouvernement fédéral à la responsabilisation des ministères. En conformité avec les exigences fédérales en matière de rapports, l'Agence a continué l'élaboration de son système de mesure du rendement. À cette fin, elle fait appel à des outils comme les modèles économétriques du Conférence Board du Canada, les évaluations de tiers, les sondages auprès des clients ainsi que le suivi exécuté par Statistique Canada. Grâce à ces mesures, l'APBCA a pu établir des indicateurs fiables des avantages économiques de ses programmes qui lui ont permis d'affiner et d'améliorer ses programmes et de fournir des renseignements au Parlement.

Vue d'ensemble du rapport

Dans la présente introduction, nous avons donné un bref aperçu des principales caractéristiques de base des travaux et de l'évolution de l'APBCA. Au chapitre un nous retravaons la progression de l'Agence et le contexte dans lequel elle a évolué de 1993 à 1998, tout en mettant en évidence les principaux changements dans la façon dont elle remplit son mandat. Au chapitre deux, nous présentons les outils qu'elle utilise à cette fin.

La partie II illustre comment l'Agence et ses partenaires créent des possibilités d'accroître le développement économique au Canada atlantique. La partie III présente une estimation des répercussions générales des programmes de l'APBCA sur l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique.

...l'Agence a dépassé les pratiques courantes en matière de mesure et de présentation des résultats de programmes de développement économique...
Rapport du vérificateur général du Canada à la Chambre des communes, novembre 1995. Les suggestions du vérificateur général ont été incorporées aux systèmes d'évaluation de l'APBCA.

La création de l'APECA a été une étape importante pour situer la prise de décisions en matière de développement plus près de la collectivité. L'Agence a pris des mesures afin de décentraliser davantage le processus en faveur des collectivités et des entreprises. Le chapitre huit contient des exemples, comme le renforcement des organismes de développement des collectivités et la multi-application des occasions d'exécuter conjointement des programmes, qui révèlent la façon dont la décentralisation aide les collectivités à créer leurs propres capacités de développement.

Habilitation des collectivités

Les activités de l'APECA, qu'il s'agisse de formation spécialisée, de counselling d'affaires, de promotion du commerce ou d'accès au capital, ont pour objet d'améliorer la compétitivité des petites et moyennes entreprises (PME) de la région. Ces dernières créent la plus grande partie (58 p. 100) des nouveaux emplois du Canada atlantique; elles constituent donc un élément crucial du développement économique.

Collaboration avec les petites et moyennes entreprises

Les disparités économiques régionales constituent un défi complexe; les partenariats sont le moyen le plus efficace et efficient de relever ce défi. La coopération de l'APECA avec les autres établissements de développement économique est constamment renforcée. Les partenariats ont accru la capacité de l'Agence de réaliser son large mandat, et ce, malgré la diminution des ressources disponibles. Ils ont offert la possibilité d'éviter les dédoublements, de tirer avantage des forces de chaque partenaire, de demeurer au courant des besoins régionaux de développement, enfin, de créer une synergie.

Partenariats

L'APECA agit comme catalyseur; elle prépare et encourage les entreprises à tirer avantage des possibilités qui découlent de la construction et de l'exploitation des installations en mer et à terre du projet gazier de l'île de Sable. L'Agence s'occupe également de cerner et de réaliser les possibilités d'affaires associées au traitement et à l'utilisation ultérieurs du gaz et des liquides extraits du gaz qui seront produits dans le cadre de ce projet extracôtier.

gouvernement fédéral. Par exemple, à titre de mandataire du gouvernement fédéral pour le faire intervenir les programmes fédéraux à l'appui des grands projets économiques, comme la mise en valeur des ressources pétrolières et gazières au large des côtes et la construction du pont de la Confédération.

Objet du rapport

Le présent rapport répond aux exigences des paragraphes 21(2) et 21(2.1) de la *Loi sur l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique*, qui exige que le ministre responsable de l'Agence présente au Parlement, à tous les cinq ans, un rapport complet sur les réalisations de celle-ci. Ce rapport doit comprendre une évaluation des répercussions des activités de l'APECA. Le présent rapport, le deuxième, porte sur les engagements financiers, les dépenses et les activités de l'Agence, pour la période du 1^{er} avril 1993 au 31 mars 1998.

L'APECA a été créée en 1987; elle est chargée de coordonner et de mettre en oeuvre les projets de développement économique du gouvernement fédéral au Canada atlantique. Cet organisme fait partie d'un mouvement plus vaste du gouvernement du Canada vers une démarche de développement économique décentralisée et fondée sur les régions. En conformité avec cette démarche, on a installé le Siège social de l'Agence à Moncton (Nouveau-Brunswick). L'APECA devait suivre le principe selon lequel le développement économique durable doit provenir de la région, et les Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique doivent être encouragés à assumer une plus grande responsabilité à l'égard du développement, en association avec le gouvernement fédéral.

Mandat de l'APECA

Un certain nombre de caractéristiques nouvelles qui sont apparues au cours des dix dernières années soulignent la façon dont l'APECA remplit son mandat.

À l'oeuvre au niveau régional

Selon des examens indépendants des cinq premières années d'activité de l'APECA, cette dernière a fait un certain nombre de contributions, au chapitre du soutien à la création d'emplois, de l'amélioration du taux de réussite de nouvelles entreprises, de la promotion de la croissance du produit intérieur brut (PIB) de la région et enfin, de l'appui général à la réduction des disparités régionales.

Ces évaluations ont également révélé que l'APECA a été plus attentive aux besoins régionaux étant donné que ses programmes ont été élaborés en consultation avec les Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique. En outre, l'Agence a joué un rôle dans l'élaboration et l'exécution de programmes d'autres ministères fédéraux. La démarche régionale a entraîné un renforcement du rôle du gouvernement fédéral dans les relations avec les provinces.

Loi organique de 1987 sur le Canada atlantique, partie I, article 4

Canada atlantique et, plus particulièrement, la croissance des revenus et les créations d'emploi dans la région.

Rôle de chef de file pour le compte du gouvernement fédéral

Dotée d'un large mandat en matière de développement économique dans toute la région de l'Atlantique, l'APECA est la mieux placée pour jouer un rôle de chef de file au nom du

l'information ayant pour but d'améliorer l'accès du public et des entreprises à la TI. La Société d'expansion du Cap-Breton a établi, dans le cadre d'un partenariat avec la Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority, un programme visant à commercialiser l'île du Cap-Breton comme un bon endroit pour prendre sa retraite. À la fin de 1997, les efforts déployés à ce chapitre avaient permis l'installation de quelque 68 nouveaux ménages, ce qui représente une valeur estimée de 1,3 million de dollars pour l'économie de l'île du Cap-Breton.

L'APBCA comme agent d'exécution fédéral : La deuxième période de cinq ans de l'APBCA a été caractérisée par la prise en charge de nombreuses autres responsabilités en matière d'exécution et de coordination de programmes fédéraux dans la région. Ce rôle est naturel étant donné que l'Agence connaît bien le Canada atlantique. Il entraîne également des relations beaucoup plus fréquentes avec d'autres ministères et organismes fédéraux.

L'Agence constituait le choix évident, par exemple, pour administrer le programme des Travaux d'infrastructure du Canada. Elle pouvait également assurer l'exécution des programmes institués pour faciliter l'adaptation des collectivités après l'élimination des bases militaires au début et au milieu des années 1990, à la suite de réductions annoncées dans le budget fédéral. Les BFC de Summerside et de Cornwallis ont ainsi toutes deux été transformées en parcs industriels diversifiés et le secteur privé a remplacé une grande partie des emplois du secteur public.

Recherche et analyse en matière de politiques : L'APBCA a toujours maintenu une capacité d'analyse et de recherche en matière de politiques en faisant appel à des ressources internes et à des entrepreneurs indépendants. La recherche a présenté les trois qualités essentielles suivantes :

1. participation du secteur privé;
2. consultations exhaustives;
3. orientation vers l'avenir.

Le projet panatlantique de coordination et de recherche économiques a d'abord été approuvé en 1992; il a ensuite été prolongé jusqu'en 1999-2000. Il a pour objet d'améliorer la capacité de l'APBCA d'assurer la coordination et la planification d'activités fédérales qui contribuent à la croissance économique du Canada atlantique. Au milieu des années 1990, une vaste initiative de recherche a comporté une série d'études ayant pour but d'évaluer la compétitivité du Canada atlantique par rapport à d'autres régions de l'Amérique du Nord et de l'Europe. Ces études ont eu des résultats très favorables. L'Agence a fait appel à des partenaires externes (comme des universités et des groupes d'entreprises) afin d'organiser une série de tables rondes portant sur des questions particulières, comme le développement économique des collectivités ou l'entrepreneuriat. Les rapports des recherches en matière de politiques ont rejoint un vaste auditoire, tant au Canada atlantique qu'à l'extérieur.

L'APBCA a réalisé son mandat dans de nombreux secteurs que le gouvernement du Canada a adoptés comme priorités nationales, notamment le soutien aux collectivités rurales et autochtones, la science et la technologie, les partenariats publics, les jeunes et l'expansion du commerce. Pour cela, l'Agence a dû assurer l'évolution constante de ses programmes, de ses opérations et de son rôle. Il reste beaucoup à faire cependant pour développer l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique, et il faut pour cela l'engagement ferme de tous les partenaires.

Programme de Développement économique des collectivités (DEC) : L'APBECA a de plus en plus encouragé les collectivités à assumer davantage la responsabilité de leur développement par aux fins de l'élaboration et de la mise en oeuvre de plans stratégiques fondés sur une évaluation réaliste des aspirations et des biens collectifs qui aident les collectivités à exploiter leur potentiel. Cette méthode met l'accent sur l'action collective locale.

Cette démarche a été réalisée notamment au moyen de mesures particulières prises par l'APBECA, y compris l'administration de la composante de développement économique des collectivités de La stratégie du poisson de fond de l'Atlantique (LSPA), et la prise en charge, en 1995, du programme de Développement des collectivités ainsi que des corporations locales de développement économique (CLDE). Il s'agit d'organismes sans but lucratif administrés à l'échelle locale qui fournissent des prêts et des conseils aux entreprises des collectivités rurales. Au cours de la période 1995-1998, les prêts consentis par les CLDE ont soutenu la création ou la préservation de plus de 7 000 emplois dans les collectivités rurales.

Ces dernières années, dans trois des quatre provinces, on a procédé à la réorganisation de la structure des organismes de développement locaux. Le réseau de Terre-Neuve est encore en cours de réorganisation; une nouvelle structure de conseils régionaux de développement économique est en grande partie en place et chaque conseil est à préparer des plans stratégiques. Il s'agit de la dernière étape d'un processus qui a commencé à Terre-Neuve en 1992 et qui souligne la lente évolution de ce type de développement.

On trouve un certain nombre d'exemples de façons dont les collectivités ont élaboré leur assise économique au Canada atlantique. Ainsi, la région du Grand Moncton s'est remise dans une large mesure de la perte des atelières de réparation du CN, en 1988; la ville a maintenant une vocation de centre de téléservice (centres téléphoniques). Des entrepreneurs locaux s'attachent à élaborer des produits et des services fondés sur la technologie. Cette évolution est survenue dans le cadre d'une série de plans stratégiques mis en oeuvre grâce à la mobilisation de bénévoles locaux. Elle a également été favorisée par la conclusion de partenariats souples auxquels ont participé l'APBECA, le gouvernement provincial, des organismes de développement locaux, l'Université de Moncton, des campus de collèges communautaires ainsi que des entreprises.

Il y a d'autres exemples de la participation de l'APBECA à des projets communautaires. Les membres de la collectivité de Victoria (Île-du-Prince-Édouard) se sont regroupés pour réaliser un projet de réparation du quai local, qui était délabré. Ce dernier était le centre traditionnel de l'activité sociale et commerciale de la collectivité. L'APBECA a aidé une collectivité académique de l'île du Cap-Breton à mettre sur pied La Picasse, un centre économique où l'on trouve maintenant un centre téléphonique, un centre de développement de l'entrepreneuriat et plusieurs autres entreprises. À Terre-Neuve, le projet Colony of Avalon vise à aménager un site historique pour les touristes et à financer des fouilles archéologiques qui sont en cours. Cinq comités ruraux de l'est de la Nouvelle-Écosse ont reçu un appui pour établir un centre intégré de technologie de

Les efforts ont été adaptés aux collectivités ayant des besoins spéciaux et aux jeunes. Dans le premier cas, on a notamment conçu un projet de perfectionnement des compétences en gestion d'entreprise parmi la collectivité noire de la Nouvelle-Écosse; un autre projet était destiné aux Autochtones du Nouveau-Brunswick. Ce dernier faisait appel à un partenariat établi avec la collectivité autochtone, le gouvernement provincial, la Banque de développement du Canada et le ministère des Affaires indiennes et du Nord canadien. En Nouvelle-Écosse, on a eu recours au Centre de développement et d'éducation en entrepreneurship pour aider les jeunes à se familiariser avec l'entrepreneurship; à St. John's et à Glace Bay, on a utilisé à cette fin des centres pour entreprises du YMCA et du YWCA.

Tourisme : L'APÉCA a mis de l'avant une démarche régionale qui fait appel à des mécanismes comme le Partenariat du tourisme du Canada atlantique (PTCA), qui assure la promotion du tourisme régional; la Régie d'évaluation touristique des provinces de l'Atlantique, pour assurer l'évaluation de l'hébergement touristique en fonction de critères de qualité uniformes, et la Foire du tourisme du Canada atlantique où les exploitants d'entreprises touristiques peuvent rencontrer des acheteurs éventuels, comme les associations de transport par autocar. Dans chacun de ces trois cas, l'APÉCA a établi un partenariat avec des associations de l'industrie et des ministères du tourisme à l'échelon provincial, afin de tirer avantage des économies d'échelle dans ce qui a toujours été une industrie très fragmentée. De 1994 à 1997, on estime que les promotions effectuées dans le cadre du PTCA seules ont entraîné une augmentation de 66 millions de dollars des recettes touristiques. Ces activités de promotion ont engendré un rendement important de l'investissement de deniers publics. Par exemple, à la suite de la campagne internationale de 1997, chaque dollar dépensé sur la promotion a donné lieu à près de six dollars en dépenses de touristes.

En outre, l'APÉCA a fourni du soutien à des projets touristiques particuliers. En créant le festival Celtic Colours à l'île du Cap-Breton, une célébration de la musique et de la culture lancée en 1997, on a tenté de prolonger la saison touristique. Une seconde initiative a été l'effort de partenariats publics et privés pour le développement de produits touristiques de calibre international. Bouctouche au Nouveau-Brunswick. La région est devenue une attraction mondiale comme destination touristique de portée à la fois écologique et culturelle. Une troisième initiative prévoit de l'aide à des associations de développement locales de Terre-Neuve qui aménagent la piste des Vikings, en partie dans le cadre des célébrations en vue des célébrations du Millénaire Viking, en l'an 2000.

Commerce : L'APÉCA s'est notamment appliquée à amener toutes les provinces à collaborer ensemble. En 1994, on a conclu une entente de Promotion du commerce extérieur (PCE), qui a été prolongée en 1997. Trois ministères fédéraux et les quatre gouvernements provinciaux y participent. Cette entente a pour objet d'améliorer l'accès des PME aux marchés d'exportation. Pour ce faire, on prévoit accroître l'expérience des PME en matière d'exportation et tirer avantage d'économies d'échelle liées aux exportations. Selon un sondage auprès de PME participant, 39 p. 100 d'entre elles ont commencé à exporter ou ont accru leurs exportations grâce à l'entente de PCE.

Certains projets commerciaux appuyés fournissent des services de formation et d'éducation en matière d'exportation, comme le Groupe de formation Nouveau-Brunswick Inc.

Petites et moyennes entreprises : Plus de 95 p. 100 des entreprises créées au Canada atlantique entre 1989 et 1995 comptaient moins de 100 employés (et 90 p. 100 en comptaient moins de 20). Les entreprises, nouvelles et existantes, comptaient pour 58 p. 100 des emplois créés dans la région.

Malheureusement, les PME connaissent un taux d'échec élevé au cours des premières années d'exploitation; ainsi, elles ont de la difficulté à attirer du capital pour démarrer et pour croître, ainsi qu'à obtenir des conseils avisés. Une des priorités de l'Agence consiste à surmonter ces obstacles. Elle a réussi à ce chapitre. Selon les calculs de Statistique Canada, au cours des trois premières années d'exploitation, les clients de l'APBECA du secteur de la fabrication ont un taux de survie plus élevé que celui de l'ensemble des sociétés de fabrication dans la région.

Le principal outil de l'APBECA pour aider les PME est le Programme de développement des entreprises; ce dernier a permis d'offrir des prêts non garantis et sans intérêt. Tous les prêts sont remboursables depuis le début de 1995. Au cours de la période 1993-1998, le Programme a soutenu la création ou la préservation de près de 44 000 emplois. Selon des sondages, seulement 5 p. 100 des clients ont indiqué qu'ils auraient réalisé leur projet sans l'aide de l'APBECA.

L'APBECA offre également des conseils et de l'information par l'entremise du réseau des Centres de services aux entreprises du Canada. En 1995-1996 seulement, les centres ont traité près de 90 000 demandes de renseignements présentées en personne, au téléphone, par télécopieur ou par Internet. Outre ces formes d'aide générales, l'Agence dispose de programmes ayant pour but d'améliorer les pratiques de gestion commerciale des PME (p. ex., au moyen de programmes de gestion de la qualité, d'outils auto-diagnostique et d'alphabetisation au travail); de plus, elle permet aux PME d'avoir un meilleur accès aux marchés d'approvisionnement du gouvernement fédéral.

Entrepreneurship : Les entrepreneurs demeurent au centre du développement économique de la région de l'Atlantique. L'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques estime que la stratégie axée sur l'entrepreneurship de l'Agence est unique car elle comporte comme objectif explicite la promotion de l'entrepreneurship et que, même s'il s'agit d'une stratégie à long terme, les premiers résultats sont encourageants.

La stratégie comprend cinq éléments principaux :

1. Recherches sur la nature de l'entrepreneurship.
2. Accroissement de la sensibilisation de la population au fait que l'entrepreneurship peut être une possibilité d'emploi.
3. Orientation et éducation des gens afin qu'ils deviennent entrepreneurs.
4. Formation et counselling à l'intention des entrepreneurs.
5. Création de réseaux et d'organisations de soutien des PME.

La réussite de la démarche de l'APBECA en matière de développement de l'entrepreneurship peut être mesurée par le fait que seulement 7 p. 100 des Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique expriment l'intention de fonder une petite entreprise en 1991 et que cette proportion est passée à 16 p. 100 en 1997. S'il est difficile d'isoler avec précision l'impact réel de l'APBECA, il n'en demeure pas moins que ses activités ont contribué largement à ce changement.

Quelques exemples précis des efforts de l'APCA

Afin de mieux évaluer les répercussions des activités de l'APBCA sur le développement économique de la région, on peut examiner les secteurs où l'Agence a concentré ses efforts.

Le soutien de l'APBCA au développement économique recoupe de nombreux secteurs et niveaux. Aucune de ses composantes n'est autonome; les projets ont des répercussions sur un large éventail d'activités. Par exemple, l'aide à une entreprise constitue également une aide à la collectivité où se trouve cette entreprise. De même, l'aide offerte à une collectivité pour mettre en valeur une attraction touristique constitue une aide à l'industrie du tourisme. Il est important de ne pas oublier ces indications en lisant le résumé qui suit et qui est divisé en plusieurs grands groupes.

Technologie : La compréhension et l'utilisation des technologies modernes constituent un

élément crucial de la réussite du développement économique. Partout, l'industrie du savoir a connu une croissance plus rapide que l'ensemble de l'économie et il est important que le Canada atlantique participe à cette croissance. L'Agence a appuyé la technologie et l'innovation de quatre principales façons :

1. Aider les entreprises à innover. Par exemple, l'Agence appuie le long processus de développement puis de commercialisation de produits commerciaux fondés sur la technologie; elle participe au développement de sociétés multimédias à l'île du Cap-Breton, ou encore, elle établit des liens entre des industries traditionnelles, comme la pêche à Terre-Neuve, et des centres de recherche et d'innovation.

2. Aider les travailleurs à acquérir des compétences techniques. Par exemple, aider l'Aviation Maintenance Institute à former des ouvriers spécialisés pour l'industrie aérospatiale naissante de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, ou encore, aider les travailleurs forestiers du Nouveau-Brunswick à adapter leurs compétences à de nouvelles technologies.

3. Aider la population à comprendre et à utiliser la technologie et la science. À ce chapitre, l'Agence a participé à la création d'une série de réseaux provinciaux qui amélioreront l'accès à la technologie et à l'information au moyen de systèmes de communication particuliers, notamment le système STEM-Net à Terre-Neuve, le Partenariat dans l'économie du savoir, à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, et enfin, le STANet en Nouvelle-Écosse. Dans chaque cas, l'Agence a établi des partenariats avec les provinces et le secteur privé afin de mettre en œuvre des programmes de soutien à long terme ayant pour but d'améliorer l'accès à la technologie. Dans le cas de STEM-Net, le système est devenu la norme utilisée pour le projet national du Réseau scolaire canadien d'Industrie Canada.

4. Participer à la création d'alliances pour le développement de la technologie, comme la Société Atlantique des essais cliniques, un regroupement d'universités et d'hôpitaux d'enseignement fondé sur les connaissances qui effectue des essais cliniques relatifs à de nouveaux produits pharmaceutiques.

plus en plus sur le développement des petites et moyennes entreprises (PME), plutôt que sur la mise en valeur des ressources ou l'infrastructure. Des analyses ont démontré que l'aide aux PME est sans contester la démarche de développement économique la plus rentable. Grâce à la mise en oeuvre de démarches élaborées localement, l'Agence et ses partenaires ont apporté des avantages importants à la région, comme on peut le constater dans les sections qui suivent.

Répercussions économiques des activités de l'APECA

L'influence de l'APECA est plus évidente lorsqu'on compare les gains réalisés par ses clients à la performance régionale. Par exemple, Statistique Canada a estimé que, de 1989 à 1995, le nombre total des emplois en entreprise au Canada atlantique a diminué d'environ 6 p. 100, mais que l'emploi chez les clients de l'APECA a augmenté de 9,5 p. 100.

Les résultats suivants sont basés sur des analyses et évaluations indépendantes. Une vérification par la firme PricewaterhouseCoopers conclut que ces estimations sont réalistes, voire même prudentes :

- De 1992 à 1997, les répercussions économiques des programmes de l'Agence sur le PIB de la région de l'Atlantique sont passés de 1,4 milliard de dollars à 3,7 milliards de dollars par année.
- Au cours des dix années d'existence de l'Agence, chaque dollar que l'Agence a dépensé dans le cadre du Programme de développement des entreprises, du Développement économique des collectivités ou du programme de COOPÉRATION a entraîné une hausse de 5 \$ du PIB.
- Selon des calculs fondés sur le modèle du Conference Board du Canada, de 1988 à 1997, les dépenses de l'APECA en matière de programmes, établies à 3,2 milliards de dollars, ont produit 3,9 milliards de dollars en impôt sur le revenu des particuliers et en taxes de vente.
- Enfin, le taux de chômage dans la région de l'Atlantique est de 2,8 points de pourcentage inférieur à ce qu'il aurait été sans les programmes de l'APECA.

De 1992 à 1997, le revenu gagné par habitant s'est amélioré, passant de 74,2 p. 100 à 75,5 p. 100 de la moyenne nationale. Il s'agit de la continuation d'une tendance à long terme qui a commencé en 1961. Cependant, étant donné que les dépenses de l'APECA représentent moins de 1 p. 100 du revenu dans la région de l'Atlantique (selon le produit intérieur brut), ces mesures globales ne donnent pas une image précise des répercussions économiques des programmes de l'Agence. En fait, les gains réalisés par les bénéficiaires des programmes de l'APECA ont été moins manifestes en raison de la restructuration de l'économie, en particulier l'effondrement de la pêche du poisson de fond, qui a entraîné la plus importante perte d'emplois de l'histoire dans un secteur industriel au Canada.

3. Accroissement du rôle d'agent d'exécution de programmes fédéraux de développement économique. La réussite d'un programme dépend d'une conception pratique et de la capacité d'exécution au niveau local. Compte tenu de son réseau étendu dans la région, l'APÉCA assure une part croissante de l'exécution des programmes du gouvernement fédéral, comme le Programme de Travaux d'Infrastructure du Canada, les Centres de services aux entreprises du Canada et les mesures d'adaptation à la fermeture des bases des Forces canadiennes.
4. Importance croissante de l'adaptation des politiques et des programmes nationaux aux besoins particuliers de la région. Dotée d'un large mandat en matière de développement économique, l'APÉCA est la mieux placée pour jouer un rôle de chef de file au nom du gouvernement fédéral dans la région de l'Atlantique. Par exemple, l'Agence a fait intervenir des programmes fédéraux pour appuyer de grands projets comme la mise en valeur des ressources pétrolières et gazières extracôtières. La création du portefeuille de l'Industrie a permis une plus grande coordination entre les ministères fédéraux chargés du développement économique; de plus, elle a renforcé la capacité de l'APÉCA d'adapter les programmes fédéraux aux besoins régionaux.
5. Démarche de développement mieux intégrée à l'ensemble de la région. L'Agence a pu instaurer une démarche régionale dans un certain nombre de secteurs tels le tourisme et le développement de l'exportation. Cette stratégie propre à la région de l'Atlantique est cruciale pour assurer l'efficacité dans une région où l'on trouve quatre gouvernements provinciaux et une population faible et très dispersée.
6. Le soutien de l'APÉCA aux PME est devenu plus varié et complexe. En tant que membre du portefeuille de l'Industrie, l'Agence met en oeuvre les priorités de la stratégie du gouvernement fédéral axée sur l'emploi et la croissance. Le soutien de l'APÉCA comprend des programmes conçus pour aider les PME de l'Atlantique à s'adapter à la concurrence dans l'économie mondiale, fondée sur la connaissance; ainsi, l'Agence offre un soutien à l'innovation et au perfectionnement des aptitudes technologiques, au développement des marchés d'exportation et à l'amélioration de l'information et des services fournis aux PME. Dans ses activités de développement de l'entrepreneuriat et de soutien aux PME, l'Agence a adapté ses programmes aux besoins de collectivités particulières, comme les Autochtones et les Jeunes.
7. Importance accrue de l'« optimisation des ressources ». Les dépenses de l'Agence en matière de programmes ne représentaient que 1,5 p. 100 du total des dépenses du fédéral au Canada atlantique en 1996. Pour que l'Agence puisse avoir un impact, il est essentiel que ces dépenses soient dirigées vers les champs d'activité pouvant générer les plus grandes retombées pour l'économie régionale. Par conséquent, les dépenses ont été concentrées de

L'APÉCA a été créée en 1987; elle est chargée de coordonner et de mettre en oeuvre les activités de développement économique du gouvernement fédéral au Canada atlantique. Elle a fait partie d'un vaste mouvement du gouvernement du Canada en faveur d'une démarche de développement économique décentralisée et axée sur les régions. Conformément à cette orientation, le Siège social de l'Agence est situé à Moncton (Nouveau-Brunswick). L'Agence a pour mandat d'accroître les possibilités de développement économique au Canada atlantique au nom du gouvernement fédéral. Dans la réalisation de son mandat, l'APÉCA devait partir du principe selon lequel le développement économique durable doit provenir de la région, et les Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique doivent être encouragés à prendre une plus grande responsabilité à cet égard, dans le cadre d'un partenariat avec le gouvernement fédéral.

Selon des évaluations indépendantes des cinq premières années de l'APÉCA, cette dernière a été plus attentive aux besoins régionaux que les mécanismes centralisés antérieurs, étant donné que les programmes ont été élaborés en consultation avec les Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique. L'APÉCA, grâce à sa connaissance directe des conditions régionales, a pu établir un rapprochement entre les besoins locaux de développement et les priorités fédérales.

Au cours de la deuxième période de cinq ans visée par le présent rapport, l'APÉCA s'est appuyée sur les points forts de cette démarche régionale. En réaction à l'environnement externe dans lequel elle évolue, aux priorités fédérales en matière de développement économique et aux besoins uniques de la région de l'Atlantique, l'Agence a révisé et renforcé sa démarche générale afin d'en améliorer l'efficacité.

Un certain nombre de grands thèmes résument cette évolution :

1. L'APÉCA a de plus en plus cherché à établir des partenariats avec le secteur privé, les collectivités, les gouvernements provinciaux et les autres ministères fédéraux afin de stimuler le développement économique. La mission de l'Agence est d'établir un partenariat avec la population du Canada atlantique en vue du développement économique à long terme de la région. Les partenariats font appel à diverses ressources, expériences et compétences. Par exemple, dans le domaine du développement économique des collectivités, près de 1 200 bénévoles dirigent les activités des organisations partenaires de l'Agence. Dans le cadre de ces partenariats, le rôle de l'Agence peut être axé sur la direction, la coordination ou la participation active.

2. Accroissement de l'importance accordée au développement économique des collectivités et des régions rurales. Afin d'encourager les Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique à accepter une plus grande responsabilité en matière de développement économique, l'Agence collabore avec des collectivités qui manifestent de la créativité et de l'initiative. Le but de l'Agence est de renforcer la capacité des organisations locales de planifier et de mettre en oeuvre leurs priorités économiques. À l'appui des priorités du gouvernement fédéral en matière de renouvellement rural, l'Agence a adopté des mesures en vue de relever les défis particuliers des régions rurales.

Acronymes ou abréviations utilisés dans le rapport

ACDI :	Agence canadienne de développement international (organisme national)
AMT :	Advanced Medical Technologies (Ile-du-Prince-Edouard)
ASC-TSAR :	Agence spatiale canadienne - Programme des technologies stratégiques en automatisation et en robotique
ASC :	Agence spatiale canadienne
BFC :	Base des Forces canadiennes
CBCEDA :	Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority
CCFI :	Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation (Terre-Neuve et Labrador)
CDC :	Central Development Corporation (Ile-du-Prince-Edouard)
CDBR :	Conseils de développement économique régional (Terre-Neuve et Labrador)
CEED :	Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development (Terre-Neuve)
CEGM :	Commission économique du Grand Moncton (Nouveau-Brunswick)
CFAO :	Conception et fabrication assistées par ordinateur
CLDE :	Corporations locales de développement économique
CN :	Canadien National
CPDA :	Cornwallis Park Development Agency
CSEC :	Centre de services aux entreprises du Canada (programme national)
DEC :	Développement économique des collectivités (gamme de services de l'APECA)
DG :	Directeur général
GFNB :	Groupe de formation Nouveau-Brunswick Inc.
ICDE :	Initiative conjointe de développement économique (Nouveau-Brunswick)
ISO :	Organisation internationale de normalisation (par exemple, ISO 9000)
MUN :	Memorial University of Newfoundland
MVGAN :	Mesure visant les gens d'affaires noirs (Nouvelle-Ecosse)
OCDE :	Organisation pour la coopération et le développement économiques (organisme international)
PCE :	Promotion du commerce extérieur (programme de l'APECA)
PDE :	Programme de développement des entreprises (programme de l'APECA)
PES :	Partenariat dans l'économie du savoir (Ile-du-Prince-Edouard)
PJB :	Produit intérieur brut
PME :	Petites et moyennes entreprises
PTCA :	Partenariat du tourisme du Canada atlantique
PTTC :	Programme Travaux d'infrastructure Canada (programme national)
R-D :	Recherche et développement
RETPA :	Régie d'évaluation touristique des provinces de l'Atlantique
RIR :	Recommandées industrielles et régionales (programme national)
SECB :	Société d'expansion du Cap-Breton
SENCEN :	Strait East Nova Community Enterprise Network (Nouvelle-Ecosse)
STANet :	Science and Technology Awareness Network (Nouvelle-Ecosse)
STEM-Net :	Science, Technology, Education, Mathematics Network (Terre-Neuve et Labrador)
TARA :	Telecom Application and Research Alliance (Nouvelle-Ecosse)
TI :	Technologie de l'information
UCCB :	University College of Cape Breton
UdEM :	Université de Moncton

Table des matières

Résumé	i
Introduction	1
Partie I : L'Agence	4
Chapitre un : Le contexte de 1993-1998	4
Chapitre deux : Comment l'APECA exécute son mandat	8
Partie II : L'APECA à l'oeuvre	16
Chapitre trois : Innovation, technologie et perfectionnement des compétences	17
Chapitre quatre : Développement des petites entreprises	27
Chapitre cinq : Entrepreneurship	34
Chapitre six : Tourisme	40
Chapitre sept : Commerce	45
Chapitre huit : Développement économique des collectivités (DEC)	47
Chapitre neuf : L'APECA à titre d'agent d'exécution de programmes fédéraux	57
Chapitre dix : Initiatives de recherche et d'analyse de politiques	60
Partie III : Répercussions générales	63
Chapitre onze : Croissance économique de la région de l'Atlantique et apport de l'APECA	63
Chapitre douze : Répercussions sur l'emploi	66
Chapitre treize : Retombées économiques générales	68
Conclusion	72
Bibliographie	73

Message du secrétaire d'Etat



Les cinq dernières années ont entraîné de profonds changements pour les habitants, de défis et de possibilités pour tous. En sa qualité d'agence fédérale dont le but est de favoriser la prospérité des Canadiens des provinces de l'Atlantique, l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique (APECA) a joué un rôle déterminant en vue de préparer la région à relever les défis et à saisir toutes les possibilités grâce à sa détermination, à ses connaissances et à ses compétences.

L'APECA s'occupe davantage des besoins de développement commercial des PME, qui représentent plus de 95 pour 100 des entreprises mises sur pied dans la région au cours des dix dernières années. Elle s'efforce de leur offrir un milieu propice au lancement et à la croissance des entreprises. De plus en plus de gens se lancent en affaires et trouvent les ressources en matière de développement des entreprises dont ils ont besoin pour prospérer ici même dans la région, notamment dans les domaines suivants : entrepreneurship, innovation et technologie, commerce, pratiques de gestion commerciales et accès aux capitaux et à l'information.

De façon pratique, les mesures conjointes préconisées par l'APECA pour le développement des organismes de développement économique communautaire, le milieu de la recherche et du développement ainsi que le secteur privé, ont contribué au renforcement de l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique. Chaque dollar investi par l'APECA a donné lieu à une hausse de 5 \$ dans les revenus des habitants des provinces de l'Atlantique.

L'APECA continue de travailler au nom de tous les Canadiens et Canadiennes de la région de l'Atlantique conformément au Programme canadien de création d'emplois et de croissance, qui reconnaît que la pierre angulaire d'une solide économie nationale repose sur la force des économies régionales.

L'honorable Fred J. Mifflin, C.P., député

Secrétaire d'Etat

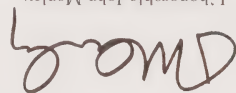
Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique

Il ne fait aucun doute que le succès du Canada au cours du vingt et unième siècle sera fonction des connaissances, des compétences et des pratiques commerciales concurrentielles que les Canadiens des quatre coins du pays sauront acquérir aujourd'hui. Or, l'une des plus importantes priorités du gouvernement du Canada est de faire en sorte que les ressources qui facilitent et accélèrent la compétitivité sont mises à la disposition de tous les Canadiens, peu importe où ils habitent.

Le portefeuille de l'Industrie réunit treize ministères et organismes dans ce but précis. Collectivement, ils s'occupent des sciences et de la technologie, du développement des marchés, des politiques économiques régionales et du développement économique. Collaborant très étroitement avec leurs partenaires des niveaux fédéral et provincial, les membres du portefeuille assurent la promotion des programmes nationaux du développement entrepreneurial, de l'innovation, du commerce et des possibilités d'emploi pour les jeunes dans de nouveaux secteurs industriels à la fine pointe de la technologie.

Ma priorité est simple : je veux m'assurer que le portefeuille offre une aide réelle et pertinente aux Canadiens afin qu'ils soient à la hauteur des défis de l'économie mondiale et qu'ils puissent exploiter toutes les possibilités qui y sont liées.

En tant que membre du portefeuille, l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique coordonne les programmes fédéraux liés à la création d'emplois et à la croissance dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. La participation de l'Agence dans la planification économique et dans l'établissement de politiques, à l'échelle nationale, a non seulement rehaussé le profil des provinces de l'Atlantique sur la scène nationale, mais elle a aussi permis d'injecter directement dans les collectivités et les entreprises privées de la région des ressources fédérales essentielles à leur essor. Ce faisant, l'APÉCA contribue de façon très importante à renforcer à la fois l'économie régionale et l'économie nationale. Le présent rapport démontre clairement les progrès substantiels réalisés au cours des cinq dernières années.



L'honorable John Manley
Ministre responsable de

l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique



Des copies additionnelles du *Rapport quinquennal de l'APÉCA présenté au Parlement 1993-1998* peuvent être obtenues en communiquant avec :

Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique (APÉCA)

C.P. 6051
Moncton
(Nouveau-Brunswick)
E1C 9J8

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N° de CAT C89-4/48-1998
ISBN 0-662-63789-5



Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique
Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

*Ensemble, pour une économie plus forte
Building a stronger economy together*

Canada

RAPPORT QUINQUENAL PRÉSENTÉ AU PARLEMENT

1993-1998

AGENCE DE PROMOTION ÉCONOMIQUE DU CANADA ATLANTIQUE

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Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Five-Year Report to Parliament 1998-2003



Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Canada 

A Commitment to Sustainable Development

At ACOA, we believe that a healthy environment is essential to the development of a strong, growing and sustainable economy. We are committed to protecting the environment of this region by promoting sustainable businesses and communities in Atlantic Canada and by setting an example in the environmental management of ACOA's own operations.

For additional copies of ACOA's *Five-Year Report to Parliament 1998-2003*, contact:

**Atlantic Canada
Opportunities Agency (ACOA)**
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CANADA

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CAT: C89-4/108-2003
ISBN: 0-662-67547-9



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*"This is a time of great potential for
Atlantic Canada. The very nature of the
new economy makes knowledge, skills and
innovation – not geography – the keys to
opportunity and prosperity."*

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien,
Prime Minister of Canada



MINISTER'S MESSAGE



The defining characteristics of Canada's economic success over the past five years have been increased productivity, improved international competitiveness, better trade performance and greater foreign direct investment. At the centre of this has been a growing emphasis on technology, innovation, skills and learning.

During this period, the 16 federal departments and agencies that comprise the Industry Portfolio played a crucial role in implementing the Government of Canada's Jobs and Growth Agenda. Working hand-in-hand with their partners at the federal and provincial levels, Portfolio members promoted the country's key economic development priorities, including entrepreneurship and skills development, innovation, trade and investment, opportunities for young people, and rural and community development.

My priority is to ensure that the Portfolio continues to provide relevant and strategic support to the people of Canada as they work to find, and capitalize on, the opportunities presented by a global, knowledge-based economy.

As a member of the Industry Portfolio, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) continues to deliver the federal government's Jobs and Growth Agenda in the Atlantic provinces. Its efforts over the past five years have, among other things, significantly contributed to the long-term economic planning process in the region. Its policy and research work has focussed attention and crucial resources on key areas of competitiveness, and enabled businesses and communities to benefit directly from economic development programs and initiatives. This report demonstrates how ACOA has adapted its programs and policies over the past five years to meet the challenges of a changing society.

Allan Rock
Minister of Industry



MINISTER OF STATE'S MESSAGE



Increasingly, in Atlantic Canada, the drivers of the region's productivity and competitiveness are its ideas, talent and ingenuity. Atlantic Canada's ability to compete in world markets now, more than ever, depends directly on its capacity to innovate productively.

Challenges remain, but it is also clear that the region is becoming more entrepreneurial, technologically sophisticated and export-oriented. Its business owners, managers, educators and community leaders are becoming more experienced and more assured in a competitive global environment.

ACOA continues to refine its program activities in support of small and medium-sized businesses in Atlantic Canada. These activities have centred on entrepreneurship and skills development, trade and investment, innovation and technology, and access to capital.

ACOA has also increased its efforts to strengthen community economic development and to expand its partnership with the private sector, research institutions and provincial governments, particularly in the areas of innovation, research and tourism.

In 2000, the Government of Canada introduced the Atlantic Investment Partnership, a balanced mix of investments in the areas of innovation, trade, investment, entrepreneurship, business skills development and community economic development. This new programming built on ACOA's past successes and brought new resources and a clearer focus on innovation to the Agency's existing strategies, priorities and programs.

Social and economic forces both within and beyond the region's borders are stimulating the growth of new, knowledge-rich industries and catalyzing innovation in older, traditional ones. ACOA is working daily to make these trends pay dividends to the people, businesses and communities of Atlantic Canada.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Byrne'.

The Honourable Gerry Byrne
Minister of State

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency



TABLE OF CONTENTS



Executive Summary	i
Introduction	1
Section 1 The Agency	
Chapter 1 1998-2003 Context	2
Section 2 ACOA at Work	
Chapter 2 How ACOA Pursues its Mandate	8
Chapter 3 Atlantic Investment Partnership	12
Chapter 4 Policy, Advocacy and Co-ordination	14
Chapter 5 Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development	22
Chapter 6 Innovation	28
Chapter 7 Community Economic Development	34
Chapter 8 Tourism	40
Chapter 9 Trade and Investment	48
Chapter 10 Access to Capital and Information	56
Section 3 ACOA Perspectives	
Chapter 11 Atlantic Economic Growth and ACOA's Impact	62
Chapter 12 Looking Ahead	68
Section 4 Technical Appendix on Methodology and Approach	70
Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in the Report	76

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) was created in 1987 to co-ordinate and implement the Government of Canada's economic development initiatives in Atlantic Canada.

In fulfilling its mandate to increase opportunity for economic development in Atlantic Canada, the Agency continues to be guided by the principle that Atlantic Canadians should be encouraged to take greater responsibility for this development, with the federal government as a partner.

In the five-year period from 1998 to 2003, the Agency's programming grew and evolved in response to the Government of Canada's Jobs and Growth Agenda, which concentrates on improving Canada's economic performance through greater productivity, increased international competitiveness, and enhanced trade and foreign direct investment.

ACOA programming put increased emphasis on technology, innovation, and skills and learning. The development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) continued, with particular importance attached to opportunities for women, youth employment and rural development. Within Atlantic Canada, and within the Government of Canada, more attention was given to strategies and policies that enable the region to move beyond reliance on the traditional resource-based industries. This change culminated in the June 2000 announcement of the \$700-million Atlantic Investment Partnership (AIP), a mix of strategic investments and programs designed to strengthen the capacity of Atlantic Canadians to innovate and compete in the global knowledge-based economy.

The Agency continued to manage its activities through a framework of Strategic Priorities.

IMPACTS BY STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Policy, Advocacy and Co-ordination

Over the past five years, Agency research directed by the policy function has focussed on maximization of benefits from innovation, research and development, as well as policy development on a wide range of sectors, including wood products, the oil and gas industry, aquaculture and other sectors.

Through its Advocacy priority, ACOA works to maximize regional industrial benefits from major federal procurement contracts and to ensure that national policies and programs have due regard for Atlantic Canada's interests. ACOA's industrial benefits activities have resulted in approximately \$500 million in federal procurement being undertaken in the Atlantic region.

In co-ordinating the federal economic development role among the various federal departments operating in Atlantic Canada, ACOA has strengthened formal working relationships with a number of departments including Fisheries and Oceans on aquaculture, the National Research Council on innovation, Indian and Northern Affairs on Aboriginal economic development and Transport Canada on transportation. Increasingly, government initiatives cross departmental lines. Indeed, the concept of ACOA as a "regional hub" is based on the Agency's capacity to deliver a wide range of federal initiatives in the Atlantic region. The Infrastructure Canada Program, for example, which invests in "green" municipal infrastructure (water and solid waste disposal systems), is administered by ACOA on behalf of the Government of Canada.

Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development

Over the past five years, ACOA's approach to entrepreneurship has evolved. The historical emphasis on awareness and promotion is now complemented by a strong business skills development agenda. This maturing of ACOA's strategy is illustrated in the recent implementation of the \$59.6-million Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development Partnership.

The Agency's interventions have made a difference in the survival rate of new entrants into the business sector. The five-year survival rate of ACOA-assisted firms is two-and-one-half times the survival rate of non-assisted firms. The pattern of survival is broadly similar across sectors, but small companies (with fewer than 20 workers) benefit more from ACOA assistance.





Innovation

The region has a much lower rate of adoption of advanced technologies by manufacturing firms. Research has shown that the most widespread obstacle to introducing improved product and process technologies is the high cost of development. A lack of skilled personnel is also a major obstacle. ACOA has been very active in encouraging productivity improvement by addressing these obstacles.

ACOA's investment in innovation and skills training has resulted in significant growth in assisted firms as evidenced by the increase in highly skilled and better paying jobs. The Atlantic Innovation Fund is providing a major stimulus to the scope and pace of innovation in the region and reinforces the Agency's expanding role in building partnerships in innovation. It is noteworthy that productivity gains within the Atlantic manufacturing sector have exceeded the Canadian average over the past five years.

Community Economic Development

Almost one-half of Atlantic Canada's population lives in rural areas, and developing the strength of these areas is an essential part of ACOA's economic development strategy. Approximately 65% of the loans under the Agency's Business Development Program (BDP) go to organizations outside metropolitan areas. This has occurred at a time when the chartered banks were closing 16% of their branch network in the region, with 45% of closures taking place in rural areas.

A recent evaluation concluded that the Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) are having a significant impact on job creation and maintenance in rural communities. Support for rural youth employment is provided through the Seed Capital ConneXion Program for Young Entrepreneurs, which makes about 80% of its loans in rural areas. Between 1998 and 2003, the program made over 2,100 loans totalling almost \$22 million.

Tourism

ACOA's leadership has contributed to significant growth in tourism in the Atlantic region. Since 1994, the marketing efforts of the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership, comprising ACOA, the four provincial governments and four provincial industry associations, have resulted in an additional \$170 million of tourist expenditures. This marketing has produced a significant return on the expenditure of public funds - \$9.00 in tourist expenditures for every \$1.00 of media purchased.

The Atlantic tourism industry has made significant advancements in its adoption of Internet technologies and e-commerce as a result of ACOA's support of the Atlantic Canada Technology Initiative. As one example, 87% of the Atlantic region's tourism businesses were involved in business-to-consumer e-commerce in 2002, compared with 42% of the businesses in 1999.

Trade and Investment

With fewer than 3% of Atlantic SMEs currently engaged in export activities, the Agency is giving particular priority to building the export base of businesses in the region through a variety of specific measures to enhance export experience and success.

Follow-up surveys indicate that close to 80% of BDP clients who became new exporters in 1998 and 1999 are still successfully exporting. In comparison, about one-half of new Canadian exporters continue to export over a three to four year period.

Since 1999, the trade missions sponsored by Team Canada Atlantic, a partnership of ACOA, the four provincial governments, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, have produced short-term sales of approximately \$10 million and long-term sales projected at over \$150 million.

The Canada/Atlantic Provinces COOPERATION Agreement on International Business Development (IBDA) is a collaborative effort between the federal government and the Atlantic Provinces. Over 90 projects, involving close to 1,600 companies, were approved under IBDA from fiscal year 1998-1999 to 2002-2003. The latest survey has indicated that 22% have started exporting to new markets; 30% have increased their volume of exporting to current markets; and 28.5% have identified potential new markets.

Access to Capital and Information

According to the Conference Board of Canada, "the SME debt market appears to be less developed in Atlantic Canada than in Canada as a whole. Indeed, there may be fewer suppliers, less breadth, fewer providers and few choices."

To fill this gap, the Agency's Business Development Program enables SME investments to proceed because the unsecured loans act much like equity, making the projects "bankable" and leveraging funds from other sources.



According to a recent evaluation of the program, firms assisted through the BDP have experienced growth in employment four times that of unassisted firms. The growth in payrolls was more than six times that of unassisted firms.

ACF Equity Atlantic is a venture capital partnership between ACOA, the provincial governments and private sector lenders. It has leveraged its capital more than five times, investing in venture capital transactions worth over \$100 million to date. The portfolio companies now employ more than 400 knowledge workers.

The Canada Business Services Centres provide information to SMEs. A recent evaluation found that 85% of clients were either "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with the services provided.

ATLANTIC INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

The Atlantic Investment Partnership (AIP) serves to link regional and national priorities and to engage public and private sector stakeholders in a concerted effort to strengthen and sustain the region's long-term prosperity.

There are four major investments under the AIP:

- 1) The Partnership for Innovation encourages an accelerated innovation agenda, including new research and development initiatives in support of bio-technology/genomics, information technology, e-commerce and marine technologies.
- 2) The Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership funds initiatives to strengthen the export performance of Atlantic firms.
- 3) The Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development Partnership addresses the technical and business skill human resource constraints of growing firms within the region.
- 4) The Strategic Community Investment Fund represents a targeted approach to building community capacity.

IMPACT ON ATLANTIC ECONOMIC GROWTH

Overall Impact

- As evidence of ACOA's contribution to regional growth over the 1989-1999 period, payrolls – a close measure of earned income – grew nearly twice as fast in ACOA-assisted firms than in non-assisted firms.
- Over the five-year period, direct Agency support to business has produced over five dollars in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) gains for every dollar of ACOA expenditure.
- Total employment in the Atlantic region is over 20,000 higher in 2002 than it would have been without the total net employment gains (direct plus indirect and induced) resulting from Agency-direct support to small business.
- Over the five years from 1998 to 2002, Agency expenditures of about \$500 million in direct support to small business have produced tax revenues of over \$600 million.

Sector Impact

- Export sales growth in the manufacturing sector resulted in nearly 15,000 additional jobs over the 1998-2002 period. Just over one-third of these jobs are attributable to firms receiving ACOA support.
- Significant growth in the tourism sector led to an additional 2,500 jobs in the accommodations sector over the 1997 to 2002 period. Approximately 25% of these jobs are attributable to ACOA-assisted firms.
- Exports in the aquaculture industry increased by almost 50% from 1997 to 2002. Almost 50% of the resulting gains in aquaculture employment are attributable to growth in ACOA-assisted firms.







Pursuant to Section 21(2) of the *Government Organization Act*, *Atlantic Canada, 1987*, the President of the Agency is required to submit to the Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) a five-year Report to Parliament on the Agency's activities. The Minister is required to table the report in Parliament on any of the first fifteen days on which the House is sitting after the Minister receives it.

This report, covering the period of April 1, 1998 to March 31, 2003, is the third to be submitted since the Agency was established in June 1987.

The report is organized in four main sections.

Section 1

The Agency sets out the government-wide context of federal policies and management initiatives surrounding the work of the Agency over the five-year period. This section also describes the way in which ACOA pursues its mandate in partnership with private and public sector stakeholders in the Atlantic region.

Section 2

The Agency at Work describes the activities of the Agency in:

- Policy, Advocacy and Co-ordination
- Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development
- Innovation
- Community Economic Development
- Tourism
- Trade and Investment
- Access to Capital and Information

Section 3

ACOA Perspectives reviews the economic performance of the Atlantic region over the five-year period, including an analysis of ACOA's impact, and concludes with a forward-looking discussion of ACOA's challenges and vision for the Atlantic region.

Section 4

Methodology and Approach is a technical appendix that provides greater detail on the logic model and measurement techniques used to determine results.



THE CONTEXT: 1998-2003

In the January 30, 2001 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada emphasized the importance of innovation and the generation of new knowledge in creating opportunity for Canadians. For its part, the federal government committed to doubling the current federal investment in research and development (R&D) by 2010, by strengthening the research capacity of Canadian universities, accelerating the commercialization of research discoveries and pursuing a global strategy for Canadian science and technology supported by more leading-edge collaborative international research.

"This is a time of great potential for Atlantic Canada. The very nature of the new economy makes knowledge, skills and innovation - not geography - the keys to opportunity and prosperity."

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien,
Prime Minister of Canada
Halifax, Nova Scotia, June 29, 2000

The Atlantic Investment Partnership, announced in mid-2000 and launched in June 2001, represents a \$700-million economic development policy framework that serves to link the federal government's national priorities of innovation, growth and development with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's (ACOA's) regional priorities of innovation, community economic development, entrepreneurship and business skills development, and trade.

As the Government of Canada moved forward with its efforts to restore fiscal stability to the nation's finances – moving from a deficit of \$42 billion in 1993-1994 to a balanced budget in 1997-1998 – federal departments and agencies re-focussed their activities around strategic priorities and service delivery improvements.

During this period, the evolution of ACOA's policies and programs have responded to:

- the overall economic policy agenda of the federal government;
- the partnership themes of the Industry Portfolio in which ACOA is a key player; and
- the government-wide priorities established for the management of departments and agencies.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Position within the Government

ACOA operates within the Industry Portfolio, which includes 16 departments and agencies that report to Parliament through the Minister of Industry.

The foundation of the Portfolio approach is a commitment by its members to effective co-operation and partnerships, a concept that is central to how ACOA addresses the needs and opportunities of Atlantic Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The Industry Portfolio

- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- Business Development Bank of Canada
- Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions
- Canadian Space Agency
- Canadian Tourism Commission
- Competition Tribunal
- Copyright Board Canada
- Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation
- Industry Canada
- Infrastructure Canada
- National Research Council Canada
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
- Standards Council of Canada
- Statistics Canada
- Western Economic Diversification Canada

DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Activity Structure

ACOA's program is divided into two business lines: Development and Corporate Administration. The majority of ACOA's efforts toward the attainment of its objectives are accounted for under Development. The Corporate Administration business line isolates the administrative functions of the Agency from the direct program-related business of the organization.

Organizational Structure

ACOA's Head Office is located in Moncton, New Brunswick. Head Office components are the President's Office, Policy and Programs, Finance and Corporate Services, Legal Services and Human Resources.





In each provincial capital in Atlantic Canada, regional Vice-Presidents are responsible for the delivery of ACOA programs. In Sydney, Nova Scotia, the Vice-President of Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation is responsible for delivering most of ACOA's programs in Cape Breton. Vice-Presidents are equipped with Ministerial-delegated authorities to approve most projects and proposals occurring within their regions.

Through its Ottawa office, ACOA advocates the interests of Atlantic Canadians in the development of national policies and programs, including the interests of the region's entrepreneurs related to federal procurement.

ACOA's legislation provided for the creation of an ACOA Advisory Board. This Board is composed of the President of ACOA, as Chair, and up to seven other members representing the four Atlantic provinces. Board members are appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister responsible for ACOA.

The Board members are successful entrepreneurs or business professionals who have demonstrated their understanding of the unique challenges inherent in establishing and maintaining successful businesses within their respective provinces. In working closely with the President, they share advice and the benefit of their expertise on a diverse variety of issues and initiatives with which the Agency is involved.

Members of ACOA's Advisory Board hold office at the Minister's pleasure, for a term not exceeding three years. They may be re-appointed only for one additional term of three years.

The President of ACOA is also, ex officio, the President of Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC), Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive Officer. ECBC is a Crown corporation established by legislation to promote and assist the financing and development of industry on Cape Breton Island and Mulgrave, to provide employment outside the coal-producing industry and to broaden the base of the economy of Cape Breton Island.

Accountability

The Minister of Industry is responsible for ACOA. The Minister of State, ACOA, reports to the Minister of Industry. The President of ACOA is responsible for the Development and Corporate Administration business lines and reports to the Minister of Industry and the Minister of State.

FEDERAL ECONOMIC PRIORITIES

1998-2000 The Jobs and Growth Agenda

As the 20th century drew to a close, the federal Jobs and Growth Agenda concentrated on improving Canada's economic performance through greater productivity, increased international competitiveness, enhanced trade and foreign direct investment. The underpinning of the Agenda was increasing emphasis on technology, innovation, skills and learning.

"Stimulating job creation and economic growth has been, remains, and will continue to be a major objective of the Government of Canada."

Speech from the Throne - First Session of the Thirty-sixth
Parliament of Canada
September 23, 1997

From an employment perspective, the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) continued as a priority, with particular importance attached to opportunities for youth employment and rural development.

The federal Jobs and Growth initiatives included:

- The Canadian Rural Partnership initiative announced in the federal budget of 1998, with a view to bringing government-wide resources to improve opportunities in rural communities;
- The National Action Plan on Skills and Knowledge for the 21st Century, announced in the 1999 Speech from the Throne;
- The launch of Investment Team Canada, announced in the 1999 Speech from the Throne, as an initiative to increase foreign direct investment in Canada;
- The Knowledge and Innovation Initiatives, announced in the federal budgets of 1999 and 2000, augmenting the role and resources of the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), the Technology Partnerships Canada (TPC) program and the Networks of Centres of Excellence programs;
- The continuation of the Trade Team Canada initiative with the private sector and provincial governments, led by the Prime Minister; and
- The re-institution of the Canada Works Infrastructure Program announced in the 2000 federal budget and directed to strategic investments in physical infrastructure.

Consistent with the priorities of the Jobs and Growth Agenda, the Agency continued to focus and refine its program activities in support of SMEs in Atlantic Canada. These activities have centred on access to capital and information, entrepreneurship and business skills development, innovation and technology, and tourism and trade.

The Agency also increased its efforts to strengthen community economic development, especially in rural areas, in association with the Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs), and to expand its partnership roles with the private sector, academic and research institutions and provincial governments, particularly in the areas of innovation and research.

As part of its mandated role in policy research and advocacy, the Agency was actively engaged in the discussion and debate concerning the economic future of the region.

Within Atlantic Canada, and within the Government of Canada, attention was increasingly given to strategies and policies to enable the region to move beyond reliance on the traditional resource-based economy and to position itself to enhance income and employment growth in the knowledge-based global economy. Accordingly, public discussion included consideration of ways in which the region could more fully participate in national policies in support of innovation and research.

This debate was evidenced in the Atlantic Vision Conference held in Moncton in the fall of 1997, in the document *Catching Tomorrow's Wave*, and in the work of research institutes in the region such as the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council. From a Government of Canada perspective, this debate culminated in the announcement of the Atlantic Investment Partnership.

"There is a growing consensus in Atlantic Canada that a new approach to economic development is needed. An approach based on innovation, trade and investment, entrepreneurship and community economic development."

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien,
Prime Minister of Canada.
Address concerning the Atlantic Investment Partnership
Halifax, June 29, 2000



2000-2003 ACOA and the Atlantic Investment Partnership

The Atlantic Investment Partnership (AIP) represents a \$700-million economic development policy framework that serves to link regional and national priorities and to engage public and private sector stakeholders in a concerted effort to strengthen and sustain the region's long-term prosperity.

Building on ACOA's mandate to enhance the growth of earned incomes and employment opportunities, the AIP has been designed to increase the region's competitiveness and productivity in the knowledge-based global economy.

A series of dynamic partnerships make up the AIP, combining the resources of the federal government with those of the research community, the private sector and the myriad of communities across Atlantic Canada:

- **Partnership for Innovation** – an investment of \$300 million in the region's innovation infrastructure.
- **Partnership for Trade and Investment** – to encourage increased exports from the region and to increase foreign direct investment in Atlantic Canada.
- **Partnership for Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development** – encourages and assists SMEs to upgrade their business and technological skills to meet the demands of the national and international marketplace.
- **Partnership for Community Economic Development** – an investment of \$135 million in support of community-based projects that strengthen economic capacity and create new opportunities for investment and job creation.

The AIP is described in more detail in Chapter 3.

THE MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

As a federal agency, ACOA operates within the context of federal government policies and guidelines concerning the management of services to the public and the accountability of departments and agencies to Parliament for expenditures and performance.

IMPROVED REPORTING TO PARLIAMENT/RESULTS FOR CANADIANS

In June 1997, Treasury Board was designated as the Government of Canada's management board. As such, the Board assumed an enhanced role as a catalyst for management change and improved governance. Results for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada provides a coherent framework for management in all government departments and agencies; defines the government's management commitments; describes how the government's management board, and departments and agencies must work together to modernize government management practices; and sets out a clear agenda for change.

The Improved Reporting to Parliament Project involved ACOA as one of 18 departments providing the first set of Departmental Performance Reports to Parliament in the fall of 1997.

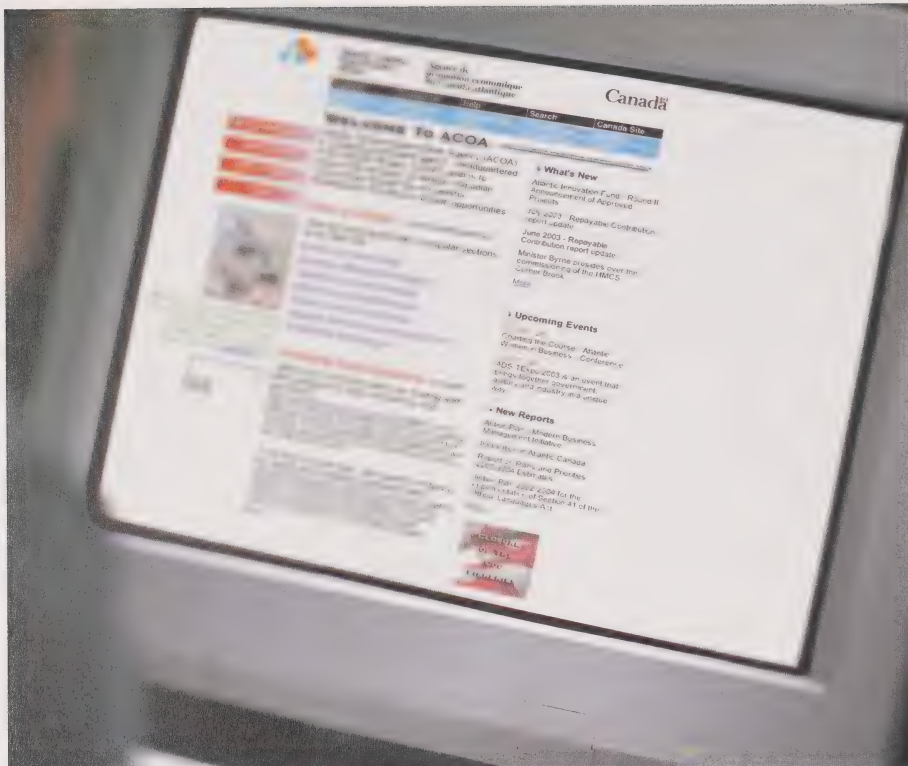
This is part of a broader initiative led by the Treasury Board of Canada to increase the results orientation and transparency of information provided to Parliament, known as "Getting Government Right."

In the period 1998-2003, as part of the Estimates presented to Parliament, the President of the Treasury Board of Canada, on behalf of the Minister responsible for ACOA, has tabled annual reports on ACOA's Plans and Priorities as well as the Departmental Performance Reports¹. These reports are subject to scrutiny by the Auditor General of Canada and reviewed by the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. ACOA has made reporting, accountability, transparency and protecting the public interest the cornerstones of its results-based management approach to program planning, implementation, monitoring, audit and evaluation.

The Agency was awarded the inaugural Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation - Treasury Board of Canada Award in 2001 for excellence in public performance reporting.

¹ The documents can be found on ACOA's Web site at: <http://www.acoa-apec.gc.ca/e/library/parliament.shtml>.





Modern Comptrollership

As part of the Government of Canada's Modern Comptrollership agenda, ACOA commenced implementation of its Modern Business Management Initiative in 2001-2002. A management capacity assessment was completed and used to identify 10 priority areas where special efforts will be made over three years to improve management capacity. The next assessment will be conducted in fiscal year 2004-2005.

Government On-Line

The Speech from the Throne on October 12, 1999 committed the Government of Canada, through its departments and agencies, to be the most connected country in the world. It established the goal of providing all services on-line via the Internet by 2004.

In the period 1998-2003, ACOA further developed the content and accessibility of its Web site as well as the electronic availability of its services to clients. The Agency

is now re-engineering business processes with a view to improving service to clients, including project-related transactions using data encryption and electronic signatures².

Sustainable Development Strategy

All federal departments and agencies are required to manage their operations consistent with the objectives and practices of sustainable development. Over the 1998-2003 period, the Government of Canada strengthened the management framework for sustainable development with the provision of guidelines for departmental and agency decision-making. In addition, a Commissioner for Sustainable Development was appointed to provide government-wide oversight on the implementation of the strategy and a variety of initiatives were introduced to promote environmental technologies and best practices.

² More information on Government On-Line (GOL) can be found on ACOA's Web site at: <http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/e/about/gol.shtml>.



ACOA's Sustainable Development Strategy, first tabled in Parliament on December 10, 1997, was updated on February 14, 2001. The strategy outlines ACOA's goals, objectives and actions to improve sustainable development in Atlantic Canada and explains how the Agency integrates sustainable development into its policies and programs. More information on ACOA's Sustainable Development Strategy can be found on ACOA's Web site at <http://www.acoa-apec.ca/e/sustain/strat.shtml>.

Official Languages Act – Section 41

Beyond the ongoing requirement to provide service to the public consistent with the provisions of the Official Languages Act (OLA), ACOA also plays an active role in the implementation of Section 41 of the OLA, which deals with

the economic development of Francophone communities. The Agency played an important supporting role in co-ordinating economic activities related to the international *Sommet de la Francophonie* held in Moncton, New Brunswick, in 1999. ACOA collaborated with other federal departments in the region in support of economic development activities for the Francophone communities throughout the Atlantic region. ACOA's support of the French linguistic minority community is evidenced by its continued, active participation on the National Committee for Canadian Francophonie Human Resources Development. ACOA is currently preparing activities to support the World Acadian Congress scheduled to be held in Nova Scotia in 2004.



HOW ACOA PURSUES ITS MANDATE

THE ACOA MANDATE

The Agency derives its mandate from the *Government Organization Act, Atlantic Canada, 1987*. The Act provides ACOA with a broad mandate for economic development in Atlantic Canada.

ACOA's mandate is to increase opportunity for economic development in Atlantic Canada and, more particularly, to enhance the growth of earned incomes and employment in that region.

The Agency undertakes a variety of policy, advocacy and co-ordination activities with respect to the broader mandate for economic development. These federal activities are undertaken in the region in partnership with other stakeholders in order to enhance the capacity and climate for growth and development in Atlantic Canada.

The ACOA legislation directs that the Agency give particular emphasis to the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Accordingly, ACOA seeks to ensure that the relevant business development tools and resources are available to serve the needs of the region's existing and emerging entrepreneurs.

ACOA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Agency manages its activities through a framework of strategic priorities that reflect:

- the results of policy research and analysis;
- periodic review of the effectiveness of Agency programs;
- ongoing dialogue with other stakeholders in the region; and
- the priorities and directions of the Government of Canada and of the Industry Portfolio.

ACOA's strategic priorities are discussed in detail in Chapters 4 through 10.

ACOA's Partners

- Aboriginal Communities
- The Business Sector
- Research Institutes
- Provincial Governments
- Municipalities
- Universities and Colleges
- Community-based Economic Development Organizations and Voluntary Groups
- Other Federal Government Departments

PARTNERS

In pursuit of its mandate, ACOA works in partnership with the people of Atlantic Canada toward the long-term development of the region. The Agency is committed to helping Atlantic Canada strengthen its own capacity for economic development, recognizing that the government's role is as a catalyst in economic development more than as the engine of economic growth. Accordingly, ACOA attaches the highest importance to developing and collaborating with other stakeholders in the region as partners in growth. Virtually all of ACOA's developmental work involves partnerships.

The Minister of State for ACOA and staff are committed to an ongoing dialogue with leaders in the public and private sector through formal and informal meetings, information exchanges, and co-operation on specific initiatives to advance the region's agenda for economic development.

ACOA works closely with business leaders and associations in a variety of economic sectors. For example, in tourism, the Agency leads broad-based initiatives with the industry through the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership, Best Practices Missions and the Atlantic Canada Technology Initiative. The Agency also focusses on specific developmental priorities such as external trade, notably through the work of the Team Canada Atlantic missions. The Agency draws widely on private sector advice and expertise through the ACOA Advisory Board, the Board of the Atlantic Innovation Fund and private sector groups.

ACOA partners with a variety of boards, agencies and commissions, particularly in rural areas. These partnerships aim to advance the community agenda for economic development and to implement specific initiatives to build developmental capacity within the community. For example, the Agency works with the volunteer boards of the Community Business Development Corporations and with local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade.

ACOA is also in partnership with Aboriginal communities throughout the region to increase economic opportunity for Aboriginal peoples. For example, in New Brunswick, the Joint Economic Development Initiative represents an ongoing partnership between Aboriginal peoples and a variety of public and private sector stakeholders working on specific developmental opportunities in areas such as training and employment.





In partnership with universities and research institutes, the Agency plays a leadership role in developing the regional agenda for innovation. ACOA partners with Atlantic universities with respect to their regional participation in the national programs of the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the National Research Council, the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council and Genome Canada and, more generally, to enhance Atlantic Canada's involvement in Canada's Innovation Strategy.

In partnering with provincial governments and municipalities, ACOA undertakes an active role in program delivery with respect to the federal government's infrastructure programs in Atlantic Canada.

With other federal government departments, ACOA initiates partnership arrangements through Federal Councils in each of the Atlantic provinces. The Councils are chaired by ACOA's regional Vice-Presidents and bring together senior officials of federal departments and agencies to improve the delivery of services and co-ordination of federal activities, particularly with provincial governments. The Councils work jointly with stakeholders in key areas such as official languages, human resource management, Government On-Line and regional economic development. The Councils also provide regional input to the management of the federal government's operations and plans.

ACOA also partners with other members of the Industry Portfolio, such as the Business Development Bank of

Canada and the Canadian Space Agency. As well, ACOA has close working relationships with other federal departments, such as Natural Resources Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Canadian Heritage, Human Resources Development Canada, and Transport Canada, where the region has strategic developmental interests.

RESOURCES

Agency spending over the five-year period was \$1.6 billion, which includes \$85.0 million on the Infrastructure Canada and Canada Infrastructure Works Programs and \$41.7 million on statutory transfer payments³.

Figure 1 represents the distribution of expenditures among the Agency's strategic priority areas (includes \$85.1 million for Corporate Administration, but excludes the Infrastructure Canada Program, the Canada Infrastructure Works Program and statutory payment amount).

Projects and their associated expenditures are ascribed to a single strategic priority. However, it is clear that the Agency has a number of mutually reinforcing strategic priorities. For example, Access to Capital and Information takes place throughout the region and could be represented within Community Economic Development.

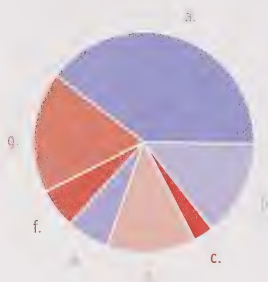
³ Statutory payments include liabilities under the *Small Business Loans Act*, the *Canada Small Business Financing Act* and liabilities for loan or credit pursuant to the *Government Organization Act*, Atlantic Canada, 1987



Figure 1

Expenditures by Strategic Priority – Fiscal Years 1998-1999 to 2002-2003

Total Agency \$1.5 billion



- a. Access to Capital and Information**
40.3% - \$602.8 million
Employment, new business start-ups and expansion for Atlantic SMEs
- b. Community Economic Development**
13.8% - \$206.0 million
Economic opportunities for Atlantic Canada
- c. Policy, Advocacy and Co-ordination**
2.9% - \$44.3 million
Greater economic activity through national policies sensitive to the needs of the region
- d. Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development**
13.4% - \$200.8 million
To develop the motivation and skills required to start and successfully grow business
- e. Trade and Investment**
6.7% - \$99.9 million
Increase exports and foreign investment
- f. Tourism**
7.0% - \$104.7 million
Increase tourism in Atlantic Canada
- g. Innovation**
15.9% - \$237.4 million
Develop and commercialize new technologies, increase capacity and growth of strategic clusters

Source: ACOA's Corporate System

Figure 2

Expenditures by Program – Fiscal Years 1998-1999 to 2002-2003

Total Agency \$1.5 billion



- a. Business Development Program**
53.1% - \$793.8 million
Canada Business Service Centres
0.9% - \$13.5 million
Provides unsecured repayable loans and central information and referral points for Atlantic SMEs and aspiring entrepreneurs, support to non-profit organizations providing services to businesses and creating a business development climate
- b. COOPERATION Program⁴**
21.8% - \$326.7 million
Joint federal-provincial undertakings that bring generic benefits to an industry, sector, community or province
- c. Adjustment Programs**
14.3% - \$213.2 million
Ad-hoc programs and activities undertaken to generate employment in areas impacted by unique circumstances
- d. Other programs**
4.9% - \$73.5 million
Promote policy research and develop economic opportunities for rural Atlantic Canada
- e. Atlantic Investment Partnership - Other programming**
0.9% - \$13.5 million
Encourage exports, tourism, foreign investment and improve the motivation and skills required to start and successfully grow business
- f. Strategic Community Investment Fund**
1.7% - \$25.7 million
Support strategic initiatives that enable communities to adopt new technologies, enhance the competitiveness of their industrial bases, and develop their economic infrastructures
- g. Atlantic Innovation Fund**
2.4% - \$36.0 million
Assisting projects in the area of the natural, applied and social sciences

Source: ACOA's Corporate System

Figure 2 represents the distribution of expenditures among the Agency's programs (includes \$85.1 million for Corporate Administration, but excludes the Infrastructure

Canada Program, the Canada Infrastructure Works Program and statutory payment amount).

⁴ Bilateral economic development agreements expired during the period covered by this report and have not been renewed.

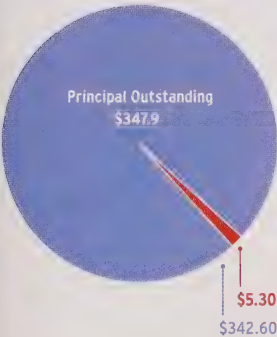
REPAYABILITY

Among its many activities, ACOA makes non-interest bearing repayable investments in SMEs to help them start up, expand, improve productivity, develop new markets and the like. The repayability provisions introduced under ACOA's Business Development Program (BDP) in 1995 resulted in a larger portion of assistance being repayable and a corresponding growth in a loan portfolio that must be effectively managed.

To further stimulate investment in priority areas, a move toward conditionally repayable contributions was approved in August 1996. This type of funding promotes a shared risk between ACOA and a client where terms of repayability are dependent on success criteria being met. Conditional repayability now applies to projects involving innovation and /or the acquisition of leading-edge technology, projects for market and trade development, as well as projects for skills development.

As of March 31, 2003, the principal outstanding on the entire repayable portfolio was \$347.9 million, which includes \$5.3 million from conditionally repayable accounts as shown in **Figure 3**. Conditionally repayable accounts are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis and, as conditions are met, amounts are deemed due and added to the repayable portfolio.

Figure 3
Repayable Contributions Portfolio
as of March 31, 2003 (\$ million)



■ Conditionally Repayable
■ Unconditionally Repayable

Source: ACOA's Corporate System

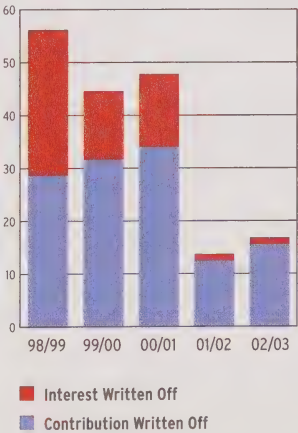
Amounts collected from repayable contributions are available to ACOA in subsequent years for re-investment. The total amount collected during the five-year period was \$213.6 million as shown in **Figure 4**.

ACOA's mandate is to fill financing gaps in high-risk areas

where commercial lenders have a tendency not to participate. The Agency fully expects to be repaid with each loan it makes. However, business is inherently risky and unlike conventional lenders, ACOA does not take security. Inevitably, some projects will not succeed and loans will not be repaid. In those instances, the outstanding repayable amount is written off.

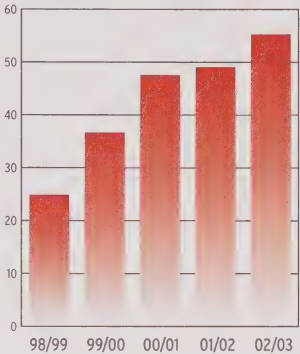
Figure 5 shows recent amounts written off, based on the write-off decision date (as opposed to the year in which the loan was made) and as reported in the Public Accounts of Canada. ACOA contributions are interest-free unless the repayment agreement is defaulted, at which time interest is charged.

Figure 5
Write-offs
Reported in Public Accounts
(\$ million)



Source: ACOA's Corporate System

Figure 4
Repayments
(\$ million)



Source: ACOA's Corporate System



OVERVIEW

On June 29, 2000, the Prime Minister of Canada and the four federal Ministers from Atlantic Canada, announced the \$700-million Atlantic Investment Partnership (AIP). This five-year, federal initiative features a mix of strategic investments and programs designed to strengthen the capacity of Atlantic Canadians to innovate and compete in the global, knowledge-based economy.

The AIP takes a balanced and comprehensive approach, placing priority on developing innovation and technology, increasing trade and investment, enhancing entrepreneurship and business skills development, and promoting rural and community economic development. The AIP is a pan-Atlantic initiative and encourages partnerships between key stakeholders, including different levels of government, communities, businesses, universities, colleges and research institutes. While ACOA is delivering most of the elements of the AIP, the National Research Council plays a role by building on its network of research centres in Atlantic Canada.

There are four major components under the AIP⁵.

PARTNERSHIP FOR INNOVATION

Atlantic Innovation Fund

The Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF) is making strategic investments in leading-edge research and development (R&D) initiatives that directly contribute to the development of technology-based economic activity. The AIF is funded at \$300 million over five years, beginning in the 2001-2002 fiscal year.

The objectives of the AIF are to increase activity in, and to build capacity for, innovation and R&D; to increase the capacity for commercialization of R&D output; to maximize benefits from national R&D programs; and to strengthen the region's innovation capacity by supporting R&D and commercialization partnerships and alliances.

The AIF entertains proposals from commercial and non-commercial entities such as universities, colleges, other post-secondary educational institutions, business associations, research institutions and private firms.

Project proponents are encouraged to lever financing from other sources including national programs such as the Canada Foundation for Innovation, Technology Partnerships Canada, national granting councils, and the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program. However, the AIF is not an automatic top-up for national programs.

A 10-member Advisory Board has been appointed to make recommendations on all AIF project proposals to the Ministers, who select projects for funding.

As of March 31, 2003, two calls for proposals had been issued under the AIF. Round I received 195 proposals (75 commercial and 120 non-commercial), valued at \$1.5 billion and seeking total funding of \$810 million. Funding was approved for 47 projects, totalling \$155 million.

Round II received 174 proposals (80 commercial and 94 non-commercial) requesting \$545 million in AIF funding toward total project costs of \$1 billion. Projects from Round II were being evaluated on March 31, 2003.

Anticipated leveraging is approximately \$185 million from universities and other research institutions (\$33 million), national programs (\$57 million), provincial governments (\$5 million) and private sector (\$90 million).

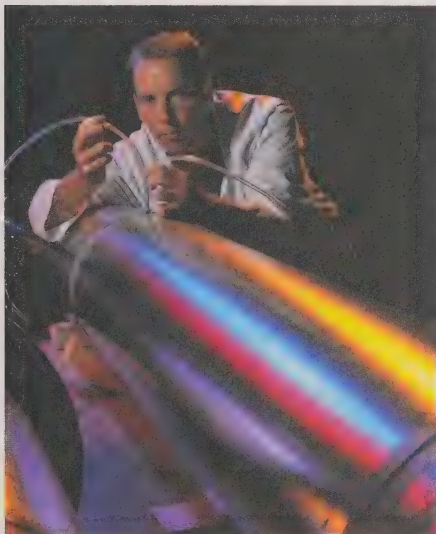
National Research Council

The Partnership for Innovation element of the AIP also involves an investment by the National Research Council (NRC) of \$110 million over five years to expand and strengthen its network of research centres in Atlantic Canada. While these NRC centres have national mandates, they focus on specific areas of technology that represent economic development and investment opportunities in the Atlantic region.

As of March 31, 2003, NRC has confirmed specific investments in E-Commerce Institutes in Fredericton, Moncton, Saint John and Miramichi (interlinked by a high-speed broadband network); the Information Technology Research Group in Cape Breton; the Institute for Marine Biosciences and Institute for Biodiagnostics in Halifax; and the Institute for Marine Dynamics in St. John's. NRC is also studying a bio-resource facility in Charlottetown.

⁵ A list of approved AIP projects can be found on ACOA's Web site at: <http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/publicationE/5year/1998-2003/index.shtml>.

These investments are considered important elements of the innovation infrastructure and are needed to support growth in leading-edge technology clusters. They are designed to forge linkages among key players and to help attract investments in new technology and research opportunities. The investments will assist in the retention of highly skilled workers and foster the growth of globally competitive companies in Atlantic Canada.



ATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

The \$64-million Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (ATIP) is designed to strengthen the export performance of the Atlantic region by enhancing the capabilities of SMEs to initiate and expand export activity and attract increased foreign direct investment in Atlantic Canada. ATIP has six key elements:

- Team Canada Atlantic Missions;
- Sector Export Strategies;
- Trade Education and Skills Development;
- Export Internship for Trade Graduates;
- Atlantic Investment Strategy; and
- Tourism Development.

Since its announcement in May 2002, ATIP has approved \$9.2 million in assistance toward 132 projects. ACOA's investment has levered an additional \$3.2 million in assistance from other partners, resulting in a total investment of over \$12.4 million.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

The \$59.6-million Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development Partnership is designed to increase the number of Atlantic Canadians choosing to start a business and to improve the ability of existing businesses to compete and grow successfully. It has three key elements:

- Innovation Skills Development Initiative;
- Women in Business Initiative; and
- Young Entrepreneur Development Initiative.

From its announcement in October 2002 to March 31, 2003, the Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development Partnership has approved over \$9 million in assistance toward 125 projects. ACOA's investment has levered an additional \$4 million in assistance from other partners, resulting in a total investment of over \$13 million.

STRATEGIC COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

The Strategic Community Investment Fund (SCIF) is a \$135-million program designed to support strategic initiatives that will help communities strengthen their economic base.

The SCIF focus is on rural communities, and on initiatives that help communities adopt new technologies, improve their industrial competitiveness, and develop selective infrastructure identified as being beneficial to their economic development.

SCIF is designed to engage proponents such as community leaders, regional development organizations and Boards of Trade to engage in discussions and develop applications for the program. Eligible recipients include non-commercial/not-for-profit organizations such as municipalities, business or technology institutes, industry associations, economic development associations, universities, educational institutions, local co-operatives or other business entities.

As of March 31, 2003, 134 projects had been approved involving \$49 million in ACOA contributions toward total project costs of \$125.3 million. An additional 196 proposals were under review at that time.

OVERVIEW

The policy function centres on how ACOA makes decisions. It can perform its role by means of discrete research, ongoing analyses of issues and trends, and through events such as roundtables and conferences that engage other parties and stakeholders. ACOA undertakes research itself, but also funds research undertaken by partners in Atlantic Canada's universities or consulting community. ACOA's Atlantic Policy Research Initiative is a pan-Atlantic program with funds specifically designated to sponsor external policy work. Policy projects are also funded by the Business Development Program.

Advocacy has two main thrusts: to maximize regional industrial benefits from major federal procurement contracts, and to help ensure that national policies and programs have due regard for Atlantic Canada's interests.

Co-ordination is multi-faceted. Typically, it centres on co-ordination of the federal economic development role among the various federal departments operating in Atlantic Canada. Co-ordination of federal and provincial activities is pursued on a pan-Atlantic basis where there is sufficient community of interest on an issue, or on a bilateral basis, province by province. ACOA plays a leading role in the Regional Councils of Senior Federal Officials in each province.

THE ATLANTIC POLICY RESEARCH INITIATIVE

The Atlantic Policy Research Initiative (APRI) is a multi-year program designed to fund policy research that enhances understanding of the Atlantic economy and how it is evolving.

The types of research sponsored under APRI usually target aspects of the Atlantic economic system that are topical and strategically focussed. The purpose of APRI is to support and enhance the capacity of ACOA to co-ordinate and plan region-wide federal activities that contribute to economic growth. It also builds policy research capacity within Atlantic Canada by developing networks of policy stakeholders, and supporting projects that have a region-wide applicability.

APRI involves partners in a network that includes universities, independent public policy research institutes, other government departments, business associations, the consulting community, and other private sector firms. Partners can reside within Atlantic Canada or outside the region, but must have

expertise and experience that is relevant to the region. Research sponsored by APRI and other means since 1998 has covered an array of topics directly relevant to ACOA's mandate. A partial list of research publications can be found on ACOA's Web site at: <http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/publicationE/5year/1998-2003/apri.shtml>.

These studies reflect an emphasis on the strategic priorities of ACOA, emerging practices in regional development, and development issues in key economic sectors. Some studies involved co-sponsors such as Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CED-Q) and the Policy Research Institute. The following case studies illustrate the breadth and scope of the policy research and analysis activities in ACOA.

Peripheral Regions' Case Study

Subtitled *The Spatial Dynamics of the Canadian Economy and the Future of Non-Metropolitan Regions in Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces*, this study originated at CED-Q and ACOA took the opportunity to co-sponsor the research and extend it to the Atlantic region. The researchers were based in both Moncton and Montreal. The study draws attention to differences in the rates of development in those parts of eastern Canada that are closer to, or more remote from, major urban centres, and how these rates are diverging.

The research revealed that people are concentrating more and more often in and around major urban centres, a finding since confirmed by the 2001 Census. Further, although information technology had been seen as a liberating force in remote regions (by bringing them closer to markets), it has in fact concentrated associated employment in urban areas. In effect, from a rural point of view, lower communications costs are offset by an inability to generate a volume of business that leads to higher productivity. In other words, distance is not dead, and there is still an ongoing need for business managers to travel to meet clients.

In Atlantic Canada and for ACOA, this research could have the effect of changing the kinds of programming that are offered to remote as opposed to urban areas, or rural areas that are near urban centres. The research includes 17 background reports, as well as the results of a two-day workshop that included specialists from Scotland, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

The Innovation Process Case Study

A series of research projects contributed significantly to understanding the processes of innovation in Atlantic





Canada and the particular challenges the region faces. Three projects that reported in 2000 were completed by the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) and examined the state of R&D effort and intensity in Atlantic Canada's universities. Universities are important players in innovation and R&D in Canada, and although Atlantic post-secondary institutions rank highly in terms of faculty and students, they lag the rest of Canada in R&D activities. Findings from the MPHEC reports were important in designing the AIF.

Another seminal piece of research examined innovation and commercialization in the region. Based on extensive consultation with innovation stakeholders in the region, this study indicates that while Atlantic Canada boasts certain innovation-related strengths, particularly that of university-conducted R&D, increasing overall R&D in the region will require significantly greater private-sector investment and adoption of technology. The study also suggests that government capacity building and investment, increased applied research by universities and the development of a common vision for innovation by all stakeholders are all fundamental to improving Atlantic Canada's innovation performance.

This research series is closely tied to ACOA's strategic priority for innovation and, in particular, examines how research groups in Atlantic Canada can more successfully commercialize new products and processes.

Aquaculture Strategy Case Study

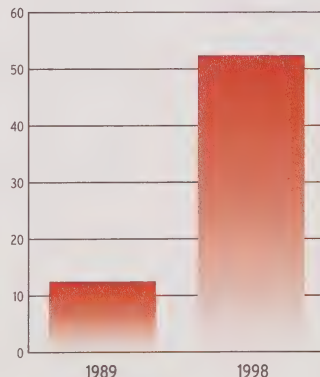
Since 1990, world production of farmed fish has doubled its share to more than one-quarter of total fish production. The growth of the aquaculture sector in Atlantic Canada

has been even more spectacular, increasing from a value of \$97 million in 1991 to \$276 million in 2000⁶. Salmon accounts for three-quarters of the value of production, and about one-half of the volume. Aquaculture's contributions to employment and gross domestic product (GDP) have also been significant.

ACOA has provided significant support to key industry needs such as financing, technology transfer, market development and training. Statistics Canada data indicate that the annual payrolls of ACOA-assisted operators increased by \$40 million over the 1993-1998 period, as seen in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6

ACOA Clients - Aquaculture Payrolls (\$ million)



Source: Statistics Canada Employment Dynamics

⁶ Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

In addition to this support, ACOA initiated various studies into the constraints and opportunities associated with further development of the industry. One such study is the recent *Strategy for Aquaculture Development in Atlantic Canada*.

This study aimed to develop a strategic corporate approach for ACOA in support of aquaculture development in Atlantic Canada. Since its inception in 1987, the Agency has worked hard to develop strong partnerships with individual growers, industry associations, the aquaculture R&D community, and other government departments. The Agency has supported many individual producers and research initiatives, several provincial strategies, and a host of local, provincial, regional, national and international workshops and conferences. It was timely, therefore, to seek an integrated strategy to support the industry's significant growth potential and related opportunities and challenges.

ACOA's sector study for aquaculture development in Atlantic Canada addresses challenges in business development (such as global competition, shortage of working capital, and adding more value locally); in R&D and technology (such as capital for R&D, availability of qualified researchers, and lack of private investment); and in federal and provincial regulatory and policy areas (such as access to new sites, the cost of the leasing process, conflicts between aquaculture and other water users, and the need for an effective fish health program).

The ACOA strategy revolves around four primary axes: expanding cluster development; responding to urgent business needs; fostering diversification in species technologies and markets; and advocating better regulatory and support regimes. Action plans focussing on business development, R&D and innovation, and advocacy have been developed from the four main strategic elements. ACOA is committed to continue working closely with Atlantic Canada's aquaculture industry to implement its strategy.

Skills Development in the Knowledge-Based Economy: A Conference of Partners Case Study

ACOA organized this conference in collaboration with four partners in 1999. The partners were the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, the Policy Research Secretariat, Industry Canada and Human Resources Development Canada. The conference brought together experts in the areas of skills development and the knowledge economy from across Canada, the United States and Europe.

It was designed to examine how well labour markets were responding to innovation and technology-based company demand for skills.

The conference reached several broad conclusions. First, the demand for highly skilled workers is increasing, as the application and acquisition of knowledge become the driving forces for new processes and businesses in industrialized economies. Second, the knowledge-based economy demands both technical and "soft" skills, with the latter encompassing such skills as communication, creativity, analytical thinking, adaptability and judgement. Third, Canada had no medium-term skills gap, although shortages could arise in the short-term in specific industries and regions. Fourth, the gap between "know" and "know-nots" is growing, presenting policy makers with a challenge to develop ways to expand the labour market activity of under-represented groups in the knowledge-based economy. Fifth, there is the threat of a wage gap in Atlantic Canada rather than a skills gap, with many Atlantic firms unable or unwilling to pay competitive compensation to obtain and retain skilled workers. Finally, life-long learning is a critical component to skills development.

A summary of the proceedings of this international conference has been published and is available on the ACOA Web site at http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/e/library/reports/skills_development.shtml.

OECD's Territorial Development Policy Committee Case Study

As a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Canada participates in the OECD's Territorial Development Policy Committee (TDPC), which provides a forum for discussion by governments on the abilities of local and regional economies to adapt and exploit opportunities for development. The TDPC's approach focusses on reviewing member countries' territorial policies, evaluating their impact at the regional level and identifying trends and best practices.

Since the creation of the TDPC, Canada has been represented by one of the three regional development agencies (CED-Q, Western Economic Diversification and ACOA). The Canadian delegation is supported by an interdepartmental committee consisting of the three regional agencies and as many as 12 other departments and agencies, including central agencies.

From 2000 to 2001, the TDPC conducted a national review of Canadian regional development policies. Since April 2002, ACOA has been the official Canadian delegate to the TDPC, representing Canadian interests and contributing to the TDPC's territorial policy development. In addition to the participation at the international committee, the regional agencies have been invited by the TDPC to participate in other countries' reviews as peer reviewers. ACOA was invited to participate in Switzerland's Territorial Review in 2001, while the other regional agencies participated in similar reviews in Italy, and the Denmark-Sweden Öresund project. ACOA's participation in this international forum gives it an excellent opportunity to study and assess development efforts in other parts of the world.

ADVOCACY

Policy advocacy seeks to ensure that federal socio-economic policies and programs are inclusive, balanced, and beneficial to economic growth in the region.

An essential element of ACOA's mandate is the advocacy of Atlantic Canada's interests in national economic policy, program and project development and implementation. Advocacy is an Agency-wide undertaking led by the Minister of State. In developing, co-ordinating and managing a corporate advocacy agenda, the Agency works to ensure that national priorities respond to the needs of the region and that Atlantic-wide perspectives, views and positions form the policy considerations of other federal departments and national priorities.

ACOA focusses on two main advocacy areas: policy advocacy which seeks to ensure that federal socio-economic policies and programs are inclusive, balanced, and beneficial to economic growth in the region; and industrial regional benefits, which are structured to build capacity among Atlantic firms by maximizing opportunities for participating in government procurement through improved knowledge and access.

The principal focus of the advocacy function is to influence national decision-making processes, both proactively and reactively. This requires ensuring that decision makers

have up-to-date intelligence about the region's priorities, strengths and concerns. Advocacy ensures a two-way flow of information from and to the region, particularly on topics related to ongoing strategic priorities. At the same time, the Agency's advocacy function must be able to respond to new and emerging priorities and to make rapid and smooth transitions as issues arise. Recent examples of these new and emerging priorities include Aboriginal economic development, immigration, rural policy, aquaculture, oil and gas, and climate change, as well as several adjustment issues including softwood lumber and fisheries closures.

Over the five-year period 1998-2003, the industrial benefits activity undertaken by ACOA has resulted in approximately \$500 million of work being undertaken in Atlantic Canada. This includes work in support of projects such as the search and rescue helicopters, space development contracts, aerospace overhaul and repair, land vehicle refurbishment, and aerospace in-service support contracts. The activity is spread across the four provinces, and ACOA continues to work with prime contractors to identify opportunities and promote quality suppliers in Atlantic Canada.

ACOA works with other federal, provincial and municipal government departments to develop more formal working relationships on a wide variety of files, including transportation, aquaculture, innovation, Aboriginal business, oil and gas, trade and investment. ACOA works closely with departments such as Industry Canada, the National Research Council, Natural Resources Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Canadian Heritage to identify opportunities for partnership and co-operation in specific areas of strategic interest to the region. In addition, ACOA has recently begun to develop linkages with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to address the demographic challenges in Atlantic Canada, given the link between immigration and economic development.

Advocacy involves both strategic and tactical approaches and decisions, requiring careful preparation, based on solid research, extensive networking and partnering with key stakeholders. Through its advocacy work, ACOA keeps the Minister and senior executives apprised of implications and impacts of government-wide priorities and activities. It also ensures that the Minister and internal and external stakeholders have the information they need to make appropriate and effective interventions, and that national policy priorities help build capacity in the region.





CO-ORDINATION

ACOA plays a leadership role in ensuring co-ordination at the provincial level among the federal departments and agencies on policies, programs and government-wide activities through chairing the Regional Councils of Senior Federal Officials. These comprise the senior management personnel of all federal departments operating in Atlantic Canada.

ACOA has also established a federal-provincial Harmonization Committee to help co-ordinate the economic development activities of the Agency and provincial departments responsible for economic development and intergovernmental affairs. ACOA's President chairs the committee, with membership made up of Deputy Ministers from each province, ACOA's Vice-President of Policy and Programs, and the regional ACOA Vice-Presidents.

Topics discussed at Harmonization Committee vary widely and have included immigration to Atlantic Canada, the role of air services in regional development, innovation, infrastructure priorities, securities regulation reform and access to capital, and the evolution of federal-provincial relations.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

The strategic priority of Policy, Advocacy and Co-ordination is a shared responsibility throughout the Agency, and each of the regional offices plays an important role in advancing the Agency's agenda. Following are selected profiles of regional activities undertaken in the 1998-2003 period.

Voisey's Bay Nickel Development, Newfoundland and Labrador

ACOA's regional office in Newfoundland and Labrador has been actively involved in the Voisey's Bay Nickel Development from many perspectives, including advocacy and co-ordination, supplier development, Aboriginal economic development, business opportunity identification and support for mining technology and innovation.

ACOA played an advocacy role in support of moving the project forward and co-ordinates the Federal Interdepartmental Co-ordinat-

ing Committee formed to monitor the implementation of the up to \$150-million federal contribution to support R&D, technology and Aboriginal training and skills development. Currently, ACOA is working with the provincial government, Inco (the private sector developer of Voisey's Bay) and other industry stakeholders in support of opportunity identification and supplier development initiatives.

Research completed and underway in support of the Voisey's Bay project includes the following studies: *E-Procurement and Supplier Development in the Mining Industry* (April 2002); *Voisey's Bay: Downstream Opportunities from Nickel Processing in Newfoundland and Labrador* (July 2002); and *Macroeconomic Impact of Major Projects* (March 2003).

By way of support to Aboriginal economic development, an Aboriginal Working Group has been formed with representation from Aboriginal Business Canada, ACOA, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Human Resources Development Canada. This on-the-ground working group, with dedicated resources in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, provides a co-ordinated effort for Aboriginal economic development initiatives related to the Voisey's Bay project. ACOA also supports an Innu Business Development Centre and, through the Business Development Program (BDP), contributed to the Aboriginal-Mining Joint Venture Workshop held in Labrador City, May 2002.

Public Sector Management Issues Forum in Nova Scotia

The Public Sector Management Issues Forum, a key component of ACOA's policy and co-ordination outreach efforts in Nova Scotia, is held semi-annually as an opportunity for discussion and exchange on key issues facing public sector partners. The two sessions held to date have focussed on "The Role of Government in the Digital Economy", and the "Policy and Management Implications of our Changing Population." The next forum will concentrate on the "Urban Agenda in Nova Scotia."

"This forum has helped broaden the policy network among the Nova Scotia academic community and senior federal and provincial managers."

Dr. Herman Bakvis,
Director of the Dalhousie School of Public Administration

This initiative is the result of a partnership between ACOA, the Dalhousie School of Public Administration, the Nova Scotia Federal Council, the Nova Scotia Office of Economic Development, and Nova Scotia's Department of Intergovernmental Affairs.

The Public Sector Management Issues Forum has led to:

- a broader understanding among participants of key management issues facing federal and provincial governments;
- an enhanced awareness in the academic community of the federal and provincial government agenda in Nova Scotia;
- the establishment of an informal policy network among senior federal and provincial managers and the Nova Scotia academic community;
- increased involvement by ACOA in the development and implementation of public policy in Nova Scotia;
- heightened awareness of ACOA as an economic development policy leader in Nova Scotia; and
- joint research conducted on energy issues across Nova Scotia in partnership with other government departments and the Nova Scotia Department of Energy.

A Vision and a Plan for Bioresource Innovation on Prince Edward Island

The AIP includes an investment of \$110 million by National Research Council (NRC) to upgrade its existing facilities and invest in new R&D institutes across the Atlantic region. In response, a stakeholder group consisting of private and public organizations within Prince Edward Island has engaged in discussions with NRC to pursue the establishment of a bioresource centre.

In support of this effort, ACOA's regional office in Prince Edward Island, together with the provincial government and NRC, embarked on a technology "road mapping" exercise to identify the critical components necessary for establishing a bioresource cluster in Prince Edward Island. After consideration of nearly 100 potential opportunity areas and detailed analysis of 10 selected areas of special interest, it was concluded that the Island's marine and agriculture industries could best serve as a foundation to build a knowledge-based cluster. It was also determined that the most appropriate research focus for a Prince Edward Island centre would be bioactive compounds.

A business plan and facility concept paper was released in September 2002, entitled *A Plan to*

Establish an Institute for Bioresource Innovation. As proposed, the Institute for Bioresource Innovation would become the cornerstone of an Atlantic Canada bioresources cluster including a world-class facility to be located on the campus of the University of Prince Edward Island. The 2003 federal budget included provision of funding for NRC to establish this new regional innovation centre in Charlottetown.

Regional Economic Adjustment, Restigouche-Chaleur, New Brunswick

In 2000-2001, Noranda announced the winding down of the operations of the Brunswick Mine over the next five to seven years. The Brunswick Mine is a major contributor to the economy of northeastern New Brunswick with a total GDP contribution of \$126.3 million annually, and direct and indirect jobs estimated to be over 3,400. The major effects of the closure of the mine will be felt in the Restigouche and Chaleur regions, which are experiencing

unemployment rates in the range of 20%. The Noranda Smelter in Belledune, which receives approximately 55% of raw materials from the mine, will also be subject to rationalization following the mine closure.

As a result of this announcement, ACOA, in partnership with other community economic development organizations in the region, initiated an in-depth analysis of the economic effects of the mine closure on the region to help SMEs prepare for changes resulting from the closure of the mine. Direct and indirect impacts of the closure were identified, together with an action plan targeting 60 affected companies in the Restigouche-Chaleur region. This plan will result in economic development officers working directly with the companies to carry out business diagnostics, business planning, mentoring and coaching. The aim is to help these companies refocus and diversify their operations toward new customers and markets.

ACOA as Regional Hub

Increasingly, government initiatives cross departmental lines. The Agency has a key role in supporting the Government of Canada's horizontal policies and programs, including government-wide initiatives emerging from the federal Speech from the Throne and the federal budget process. The concept of ACOA as a "regional hub"

centres on the Agency's capacity to act as an agent for the delivery of a range of federal initiatives in the Atlantic region. It involves partnerships with other federal departments, provincial governments, municipalities, universities and the private sector. It entails operating at the level of policy initiatives as well as the delivery of programs and services on behalf of other departments and agencies.

Examples of program delivery on behalf of partners would be the federal infrastructure initiatives. These have been a feature of federal programming since the early 1990s, and have mostly related to improving municipal infrastructure with funding on a cost-shared basis. Under the agreements negotiated with each province, ACOA receives and evaluates proposals on behalf of the federal government. The current program includes initiatives to improve environmental quality through investments in "green" municipal infrastructure (water and solid waste disposal systems).

"The Institute for Bioresource Innovation will become the cornerstone of an Atlantic Canada knowledge-based bioresources cluster."

*From A Plan to Establish an Institute for Bioresource Innovation,
University of Prince Edward Island,
September 2002*

As part of its regional hub role, ACOA has also initiated agreements and Memoranda of Understanding with other federal departments, some of which include funding provisions. An example is the \$10-million agreement with Canadian Heritage to co-ordinate the design and delivery

of a certain range of federal heritage initiatives in Atlantic Canada. Arrangements such as this enable ACOA to draw on the economic development aspects of other departments' mandates so as to mobilize and harness the federal government's efforts in Atlantic Canada more effectively.

OVERVIEW

A key means of achieving more employment and economic opportunity in Atlantic Canada is to ensure there are more entrepreneurs.

It is widely recognized that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are at the heart of the Atlantic economy. Yet the use of the technical term “SMEs” tends to mask that what we are really talking about are people who are entrepreneurs. These are the men and women, our neighbours, people in our communities, who start and grow businesses, creating employment for themselves and for others.

A key means of achieving more employment and economic opportunity in Atlantic Canada is to ensure there are more entrepreneurs. The Agency's long-term focus on fostering more and better entrepreneurs is a deliberate strategy that recognizes that before there can be an exporter, before there can be an innovator, there must first be an entrepreneur.

This is why ACOA has made the growth of entrepreneurship and business skills development a strategic priority. The purpose is to provide Atlantic Canadians with increased opportunities to develop the motivation and business skills required to start and successfully grow their own businesses.

Figure 7

**Start-up Firm Survival Rates:
All Industries
Percentage of firms
surviving in each year
(Percentage)**



Source: Statistics Canada Employment Dynamics database

Start-up firm survival rates are shown in Figure 7. The five-year survival rate of ACOA-assisted firms is two and one-half times the survival rate of non-assisted firms.

The pattern of survival is broadly similar across sectors, but small companies (with fewer than 20 workers) benefit more from ACOA assistance.

ACOA's approach is grounded in the knowledge that the right tools and business environment can facilitate the growth of entrepreneurship and business skills. Typically, people who pursue entrepreneurship have had formative experiences, role models and learning opportunities that fostered the motivation, attitudes and skills that led them to the creation of a business. It is these experiential opportunities to explore entrepreneurship and develop business skills that ACOA supports and encourages.

Historically, ACOA's approach has emphasized raising the profile of entrepreneurship as a viable career alternative, particularly among young people. This includes working at all levels of the education system as well as undertaking a variety of awareness and promotion activities. The aim is to grow the pool of people who have the motivation to explore entrepreneurship.

Over the past five years, ACOA's approach to entrepreneurship has evolved based on experience, research and client feedback. The historical emphasis on awareness and promotion is now complemented by a strong business skills development agenda. This evolution of ACOA's strategy is illustrated in the recent implementation of the Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development Partnership. This \$59.6-million component of the AIP is composed of the following three elements:

- The Innovation Skills Development Initiative (ISDI) will enable SMEs to undertake training or hire the skilled workers needed to flourish in the global, knowledge-based economy. It focusses on innovation, R&D, technology commercialization and the ability to adopt technologies.
- The Women in Business Initiative (WBI) is designed to improve the growth and competitiveness of women-owned businesses and increase their representation in Atlantic Canada's emerging growth sectors. The WBI focusses on strengthening management capabilities and business development skills of women business owners, improving their access to capital and business



support services, and increasing the involvement of women-owned business in exports and knowledge-based industries.

- The Young Entrepreneur Development Initiative (YEDI) is designed to enable more young Atlantic Canadians to develop the attitudes and business skills needed to successfully launch and grow a business. Through YEDI, aspiring entrepreneurs will have new opportunities to translate their intentions into reality, and existing young entrepreneurs will be able to develop the business skills needed to survive and grow.

STRENGTHENING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE IN ATLANTIC CANADA

ACOA's investment in entrepreneurship development in Atlantic Canada gives particular emphasis to formative influences in education, to public awareness and understanding of entrepreneurship, and to specific and practical steps by small businesses to enhance the development of the business skills necessary for survival and growth. Following are some profiles of ACOA's investments in this strategic priority during the 1998-2003 period.

Entrepreneurship Education

In order to nurture an entrepreneurial culture, it is important to expose young people to the idea of entrepreneurship at an early age, as they form their attitudes, develop skills and make career choices. This approach has led ACOA to a number of initiatives designed to offer students at all levels an exposure to entrepreneurship as a viable career option.

Through a number of projects with the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, which represents the four provincial departments of education, ACOA has invested in the development of entrepreneurship educational resources and related teacher training. The provincial departments of education estimated that approximately 250,000 students per year within the public school system in Atlantic Canada had the opportunity to be exposed to entrepreneurial values and concepts in the classroom. This represented over 60% of the total student population.

With the Agency's encouragement and support, the Atlantic Colleges Committee for Entrepreneurial Development Inc. (ACCED) was established to produce resources for instructors, foster professional development of entrepreneurship, and implement community entrepreneurship development initiatives through the colleges. As a result of ACCED's work, a total of 467 college instructors have been trained in the skills required to create an entrepreneurial learning environment.

"ACCED values the close co-operation between the colleges and the various levels of government. Both instructors and students benefit by knowing more about entrepreneurship and how that translates into being more 'entrepreneurial' in the classroom."

Annette St-Onge, Executive Director, ACCED

Increasing Awareness and Information

Research has shown that young Atlantic Canadians benefit from exposure to role models who help them to understand that they can create opportunities for themselves by starting a business. Young people will tend to take their cues from peers and their overall environment as they make up their own minds about what they perceive to be their life options.

With this in mind, ACOA has supported the development of two complementary initiatives to promote awareness of entrepreneurship through television productions. One series profiles young entrepreneurs from Atlantic Canada on the award-winning CBC television series *Street Cents*. The other involves production and televised broadcast on Radio-Canada of vignettes of young Atlantic Canadian Francophone entrepreneurs. In both cases, the Internet is used strategically to supplement television airtime.

Both of these initiatives have educational elements including visits to schools and colleges to promote entrepreneurship as a career choice and development of resources for use by teachers. Many thousands of young people from Atlantic Canada, their parents and their teachers, have now been exposed to positive and realistic messages about what it means and what it takes to be an entrepreneur.

It is encouraging to see how young Atlantic Canadians react to seeing their peers pursuing entrepreneurship. For example, the entrepreneurship segment of *Street Cents* is the most popular part of the show, always generating plenty of e-mails and feedback from young viewers. Considering that Atlantic Canadians make up more than 21% of the total national audience for *Street Cents*, the power of this sort of role modelling is evident and profiles young Atlantic Canadian entrepreneurs on a national stage.

For the *Street Cents* program, ACOA's partners included CBC Television (Atlantic), as the proponent, as well as Industry Canada's School Net, the Canadian Securities Commission, the Counselling Foundation of Canada and the Insurance Institute of Canada. For the Francophone

vignettes program, ACOA's partners were *le Centre Assomption de recherche et de développement en entrepreneuriat* at the *Université de Moncton*, HRDC and *TelVision Ltée*, a private sector production house.

Youth Ventures

To build an entrepreneurial culture, it is necessary to go beyond merely creating awareness of it as a career option. Once that spark is ignited and an interest exists, it is important to provide opportunities to explore the start-up of a business in a practical and hands-on way. In other words, at some point, it is time to stop thinking about

entrepreneurship and time to start doing.

The Youth Ventures Program is designed to promote entrepreneurial awareness among the young people of Newfoundland and Labrador and to build a stronger bridge between the education system and

the business world. The program, which is delivered by the Provincial Association of CBDs, helps young people start a summer business by providing access to business counselling and business plan development. The concept for Youth Ventures was developed in St. Anthony, and since then, has been delivered at various sites throughout the province. Through the program, young people can either finance a business with their own funds or apply for a student business loan from the Business Development Bank of Canada.

Since 1998, the program has attracted on average 330 participants annually, resulting in approximately 220 student ventures each summer. During the 2002 venturing season, 460 individuals participated in the program, creating in excess of 300 summer-time student businesses.

The Youth Ventures Program was a partnership between ACOA and the Provincial Association of CBDs, the Business Development Bank of Canada, Y-Enterprise Centre, Red Ochre Regional Economic Development Board, Nortip Inc., HYRON Regional Development Board, and the provincial departments of Education, and Industry, Trade and Rural Development.

"Youth Ventures has helped me become more independant and taught me how to relate with the public."

Roland Reid, Moose Design T-Shirts, Rocky Harbour, NL

"The program can help you express yourself creatively through a business."

Chelsea Howard, Dorset Spirit Stones, Baie Verte

I Want to be a Millionaire

To ensure as many young people as possible are able to recognize and successfully pursue business ideas, it is important to provide opportunities to learn about entrepreneurship in a fun and supportive environment. Exposure to entrepreneurship at an early age also helps avoid the all-too-common situation where young people, seeing no other option, head for the larger cities in search of jobs. This is a particular concern for the many rural and small towns that make up Atlantic Canada.

In Prince Edward Island, the I Want to be a Millionaire program is directed at in-school youth ages 8 to 16 and affords a hands-on experience in setting up and running a business through the summer months.

In addition to the experience of starting and running their own businesses, participants gain confidence and learn valuable skills such as maintaining accurate financial records, public speaking, marketing, time management, Internet and other business management skills. Community business leaders take part in the program, which is delivered in partnership with participating CBDCs.

Over the last five years, this initiative has resulted in the start up of 410 new businesses on Prince Edward Island.

University Business Development Centres

A broad support network is needed to support those individuals who are pursuing the start-up and growth of business. This is where it becomes crucial to provide support services and business skills development opportunities so that budding entrepreneurs can maximize their chances for success. A University Business Development Centre (UBDC) is an example of how entrepreneurship can be further nurtured.

UBDCs are unique vehicles for facilitating entrepreneurship and business skills development. They involve the local community, the participating university and the student body in the development of a more vibrant entrepreneurial culture. UBDCs offer low-cost counselling and consulting services to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs and business owners in the communities they serve. They also offer opportunities for the students of their home universities

to work with entrepreneurs and businesses. The UBDCs also undertake a variety of entrepreneurial, economic development and skills development projects.

"We're quite a bit more cautious with the money we make than when Mom and Dad hand it out."

Past Millionaire participants Jordan Stetson, 10, and his sister, Michelle, 8, of Freetown, PEI, who ran their own hog farming business in 2002

There are five ACOA-supported UBDCs in Nova Scotia, located at Acadia University, Mount Saint Vincent University, St. Francis Xavier University, Saint Mary's University and Université Sainte-Anne.

From January 1998 to August 2002, the five UBDCs counselled over 4,500 clients. This contributed toward the creation and maintenance of approximately 800 businesses and the creation of over 1,200 full-time sustainable jobs. As well, student participation and exposure to entrepreneurship through UBDC activities has grown. In the 1998-1999 academic year, 400 students received entrepreneurial guidance. For the 2001-2002 academic year, about 4,000 students from all disciplines of the university were actively involved in the centres.

"The UBDCs provide mutually beneficial links between the university and the business communities. The result is an enhanced entrepreneurial spirit between these sectors and the opportunity for commercialization of innovation."

Chris Pelham, Executive Director, Acadia Centre for Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Acadia University

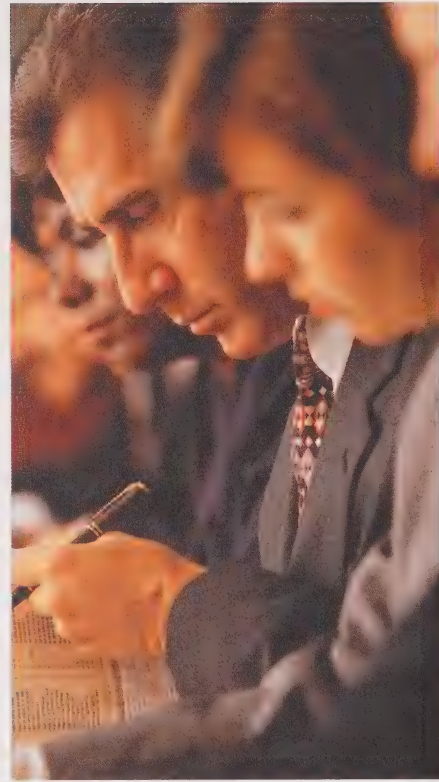
Business Skills Development - ProfitLearn

ACOA has recognized that entrepreneurs constantly need to acquire new business management skills as they start and grow their businesses. In New Brunswick, ACOA has worked with the New Brunswick Training Group Incorporated (NBTGI) to deliver management skills training. The NBTGI is a self-sufficient organization that has a strong roster of experienced business trainers and has developed ProfitLearn as a vehicle to deliver this training.

ProfitLearn brings together business trainers and entrepreneurs in workshops enabling participants to develop business skills in a cost-efficient manner, while at the same time allowing for a degree of networking. ProfitLearn also offers one-on-one post-training consultation sessions to ensure that new skills and techniques are practised.

The main areas of training are marketing and sales, strategic planning, human resources development, financial management, management and operations, and information technology. ProfitLearn also offers a Web site that includes a diagnostic for entrepreneurs, access to experts/consultants, and information of interest to entrepreneurs. NBTGI works closely with 25 marketing partners, including economic development agencies in the province. The CBDs, Community Economic Development Agencies, local Chambers of Commerce and other economic development agencies work with NBTGI on the planning and delivery of the training sessions to new and existing entrepreneurs. The growth of ProfitLearn has been impressive. Currently, over 1,000 entrepreneurs attend training through ProfitLearn each year. Participants rated

the training sessions as "Excellent" (60%) or "Very Good" (32%). The program is client driven and has enjoyed success throughout the province in every geographic region and in all sectors.



"The ProfitLearn workshops were very informative and motivating. My business is successfully growing because of the many things I learned."

Susan Robichaud, owner of Miramichi-based
Ink Spot Marketing and Design.

Business Skills Development - Virtual Media Productions Ltd.

ACOA's support for the development of entrepreneurship and business skills extends to the individual firm. To understand why ACOA is involved in this aspect of business skills development, it is important to understand that almost three-quarters of Atlantic businesses have fewer than five employees. This means that a firm's ability to survive and grow is often limited by the internal resources and expertise available. In other words, not every small firm is going to possess the marketing, trade or innovation experience it needs to grow. ACOA has a role to play in helping firms like Virtual Media Productions Limited (VMP).

To help implement its business strategy, VMP approached Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (which delivers ACOA

programming in Cape Breton) to develop its marketing capacity. VMP wanted to launch an aggressive marketing campaign to promote the company to markets outside of Atlantic Canada, particularly New England and New York. Through this project, the company was able to engage a full-time marketing manager to develop and implement the promotional activities. The firm has since conducted promotional and advertising campaigns both through the media and through travel and trade shows. VMP is proving itself as a professional animation company that is expanding into new markets, creating wealth and jobs in Cape Breton as it grows.

VMP has completed two independently produced, computer animated television shows. The first was *Little Buck's Christmas*, which was broadcast on CTV for the first time in December 2000. The second was *Evil Schmeevil*, a Halloween special aired by Teletoon in December 2001. *Little Buck's Christmas* has been picked up for distribution by one of the world's largest distributors of television programming, Peppermint.

Founded by two youth entrepreneurs, VMP has experienced continual growth over the last several years and currently operates with a staff of 15.

Federal Plan for Gender Equality

In 2000, ACOA undertook a structured review that identified the key needs of women entrepreneurs. The analysis led to the creation of the three-year, \$17-million Women in Business Initiative (WBI), announced by the Minister of State for ACOA in October 2002. The goal of the WBI is improved growth and competitiveness of women-owned businesses and their greater representation in Atlantic Canada's emerging growth sectors. The WBI focusses on business management skills, improved access to capital and business support services, and exporting and innovation.

Since October 2002, ACOA has established a Women in Business Team with dedicated personnel across the Atlantic region; partnerships with such organizations as the Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs, the Prince Edward Island Business Women's Association Inc., and the Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporations; a roster of qualified consultants to provide consulting services under the WBI Consultant Advisory Service; and, a Communication Strategy and communication collateral materials to promote the initiative.

OVERVIEW

ACOA's vision for innovation in Atlantic Canada is to create a region that is recognized for its innovative capacity and its competitiveness in global markets, with an environment that contributes to SME innovation.

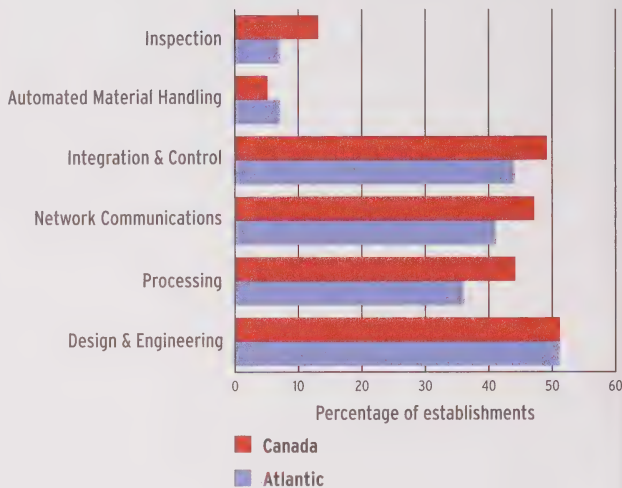
Realizing this vision means that ACOA must face some fundamental challenges. Some of the more prominent ones include ensuring that the key components of the region's innovation system are linked to promote better interaction among the innovation players, and facilitating the development of strategic sectors/clusters. As well, it is a challenge to ensure a strengthened SME capacity to innovate, with better access to risk-oriented financing and with the ability to develop and commercialize new ideas. It also includes tackling the critical human resources constraints experienced by innovative firms, especially those in the knowledge-based economy, and enhancing opportunities for the region to both retain and attract highly qualified graduates.

Finally, it is a challenge to ensure that the benefits of research carried out in the region are realized to a greater extent by Atlantic business and that the region is well recognized for its innovative role, contributing to both the development and access to benefits of national policy and programs.

As noted in **Figure 8**, the region has a much lower rate of adoption of advanced technologies by manufacturing firms. Only 26% of manufacturing establishments in Atlantic Canada use at least one of 22 advanced technologies in their operations, compared with 35% for Canada.

Figure 8

Atlantic Canada Trailing in the Adoption of Advanced Manufacturing Technologies



Source: Statistics Canada, Custom Tabulation

Research has shown that the most widespread obstacle to introducing improved product and process technologies has been the high cost of development (63%)⁷. This was followed by inability to devote staff to projects on an ongoing basis because of production requirements (61%) and lack of skilled personnel (38%). ACOA has been very active in encouraging productivity enhancements by addressing these obstacles.

ACOA support for the efforts of firms to overcome these constraints has resulted in

significant economic growth from increased sales, higher productivity and more highly skilled and better-paid job opportunities. For example, a recent evaluation of the Business Development Program (BDP)⁸ reports that firms undertaking innovation projects reported a 95% increase in wages over the 1998-2001 period compared with 40% for all BDP-assisted firms.

"In the 21st century, our economic and social goals must be pursued hand-in-hand. Let the world see in Canada a society marked by innovation and inclusion, by excellence and justice."

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada
Reply to Speech from the Throne, January 2001

⁷ Survey of Innovation – Statistics Canada, 1999.

⁸ Evaluation of ACOA's Business Development Program, ACOA, February 2003.



Concerning BDP support for skills training, the evaluation reported that most assisted SMEs indicated the investments made a difference to their bottom lines and growth strategies.

In June 2000, ACOA launched the five-year Atlantic Investment Partnership, a key thrust of which is to strengthen the capacity of Atlantic Canadians to innovate and compete in the global, knowledge-based economy.

While attribution is difficult to measure, it is noteworthy that productivity gains within the Atlantic manufacturing sector have improved relative to the Canadian average over the past several years. Notwithstanding the challenges, productivity has kept pace with the national pace over the 1997-2001 period. Growth in the region's labour productivity averaged 1.5% over this period, compared with 1.5% for Canada. Gains in the resource sectors, especially in the oil and gas extraction industry, provided support to overall

productivity growth in the region. Also, improvements in labour productivity within the food and paper industries in particular have resulted in relatively strong labour productivity growth in Atlantic Canada's manufacturing sector – increasing by an annual average of 0.6% between 1997 and 2001, greater than the 0.1% rate registered for Canada. However, despite recent improvements in the performance of the manufacturing sector, labour productivity in Atlantic Canada, or value-added per employed worker, remained at 81% of the national level in 2001.

In June 2000, ACOA launched the five-year Atlantic Investment Partnership (AIP), a key thrust of which is to strengthen the capacity of Atlantic Canadians to innovate and compete in the global, knowledge-based economy. The major investments under the AIP are: \$300 million for Innovation; \$110 million for the expansion of National Research Council activities in the region; \$64 million for Trade and Investment; \$59.6 million for Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development; and \$135 million for Community Economic Development. Complementing the AIP was a \$31.4 million top-up to the Canada-Newfoundland COOPERATION Agreement.

One of the investments, the AIE, is designed to strengthen innovation capacity through new investments in R&D activities that lead to the commercialization of new products, services

or technologies in economic sectors that have demonstrated potential for growth. An independent Advisory Board was established for the AIF and comprises knowledgeable individuals with experience in R&D and technology. Funding was available through a Request for Project Proposals process.

The other part of AIP that is playing a key role in innovation within the region is the Innovation Skills Development Initiative (ISDI) under the Entrepreneurship Business Skills Development Partnership. ISDI is designed to encourage and support innovation capacity building by developing a firm's innovation and technology management capabilities. Funding is on a project-by-project basis for ISDI, with applicants applying for funding under the BDP. Elements of SCIF and trade investment may also involve innovation initiatives. Further details on the AIF investments to March 31, 2003 are reported in Chapter 3.

The BDP complements the AIP by continuing to focus on SMEs and offering access to capital in the form of interest-free, unsecured loans, with provisionally repayable loans in areas such as SME innovation. The BDP also provides non-repayable contributions to not-for-profit organizations that provide support services for SME innovation. The Agency has also funded a number of projects at Atlantic universities to assist in bringing research from the laboratory to commercialization.

INVESTING IN INNOVATION

The AIF is providing a major stimulus to the scope and pace of innovation in the region and supports the Agency's expanding role in building partnerships in innovation. R&D efforts in the region are much lower than national levels. During 2000, total expenditures on R&D in Atlantic Canada as a percentage of GDP were 1.1%, compared with 1.9% for Canada. The region is much more reliant on the public sector, including government and education institutions, for both the funding and performance of R&D.

The private sector funds only 18% of all R&D activity in Atlantic Canada, a much smaller proportion than the national figure of 42%. The federal government, in particular, funds a significant proportion (34%) of R&D in the region, compared with 18% for Canada. Higher educational institutions, particularly universities, account for the largest share of Atlantic R&D funding (40%) versus 18% for Canada as a whole.

Following is a profile of five examples of investments in innovation undertaken by the Agency in the period 1998-2003.

Genome Atlantic

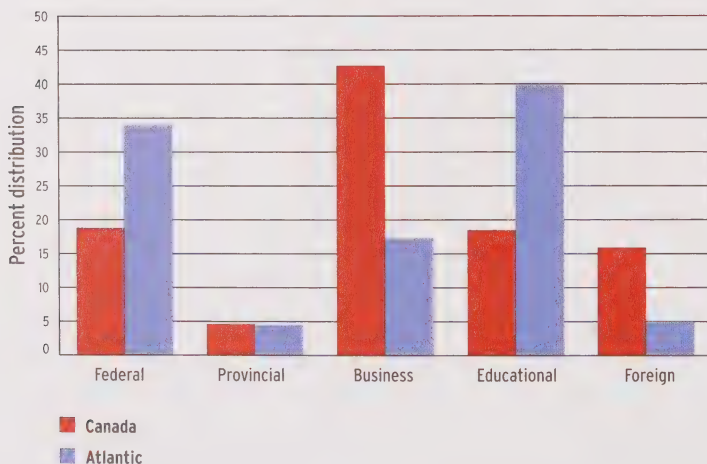
Incorporated in July 2000, Genome Atlantic is centred in Halifax and is one of five regional centres established

across Canada in conjunction with Genome Canada, a not-for-profit corporation spearheading the national effort to make Canada a world leader in genomics research. Genome Atlantic is a not-for-profit consortium of individuals representing university, government and other research partners in the Atlantic region. It aims to achieve world leadership in select areas of genomics, particularly relating to microbes, potatoes and spruce.

Once funding for Genome Canada was announced in the 2000 Budget, Genome Atlantic was established by Dalhousie University, the University of New Brunswick,

Figure 9

R&D Funding by Sector Atlantic Canada and Canada, 2000



Source: Statistics Canada



the University of Prince Edward Island, Memorial University of Newfoundland, the National Research Council and Genome Canada. Genome Canada funds 50% of the total costs of R&D projects that are considered by an international review panel to be world-leading genomics research. To date, Genome Atlantic has been awarded over \$15 million from Genome Canada to undertake four large-scale genomics projects and establish a DNA Sequencing facility in Halifax. In July 2002, Genome Atlantic was awarded an additional \$9 million from the AIF to match the contribution received by Genome Canada.

Genome Atlantic will establish a cluster of genomics expertise and world-leading science that will be vital to building the region's capacity to innovate as well as to attract and retain world-class researchers in this important field. In addition to enhanced R&D capacity and increased research discoveries, Genome Atlantic will provide a much-needed commercialization vehicle that will encourage the protection and exploitation of intellectual property and the creation of spin-off companies to commercialize new discoveries.

Logging Environmental Data in the Oceans – LOTEK Wireless Inc., Newfoundland and Labrador

LOTEK Wireless Inc. has created a device with applications for marine scientists all over the world. The company has developed the world's smallest geolocation data storage tag to help track salmon moving in the open ocean.

Geolocation data storage tags are microprocessor-controlled tags that record data such as water depth, temperature and light levels, and enable researchers to determine the location of the readings. Scientists have been tagging marine animals for over 20 years. Although

"This contribution from AIF is critical to the innovation process in Atlantic Canada and will help improve the region's competitiveness as we use knowledge in a focussed manner to create a robust and innovative economy."

Joe Gillis, Genome Atlantic's CEO

the United Kingdom. As a result of this work, LOTEK received the 2002 Canada Export Award for Innovation and Technology.

Innovation for Environmental Quality – Rawdon Technologies Ltd., Cape Breton

Rawdon Technologies Ltd., of Sydney, is one of 430 environmental companies that make up one of the fastest growing industries in Nova Scotia. Rawdon Technologies offers significant technological advancements in the field of water and waste-water treatment. The company was established in November 1998 as a joint venture of three firms, Lynk Electric Limited, of Sydney, ABL Environmental Consultants, of Dartmouth, and Trihedral Engineering Limited, of Bedford.

Rawdon was instrumental in the success of the Birch Grove Water Treatment facility. Birch Grove is a fully automated plant monitored and controlled by Cape Breton Regional Municipality's operators through the municipality's main

Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system. This system is unique because it was designed, engineered and manufactured entirely in Nova Scotia. The Rawdon equipment is designed to be operator-friendly and enhanced the use of the dissolved air flotation process.

Institut de recherche médicale Beauséjour, New Brunswick

The *Institut de recherche médicale Beauséjour* is a not-for-profit medical research facility dedicated to developing

tags have become more sophisticated in the past few years, none have existed that were small enough to study salmon.

With assistance from ACOA, LOTEK developed such a tag. The development incorporated recent advances in microelectronics, memory size and circuit board fabrication, and involved partnerships in Ontario and

"In our industry significant research investments are essential for the development of new products. We thank ACOA for its support of the research and development efforts leading to the creation of this award-winning technology and innovative product."

Jim Lotimer, CEO, LOTEK Wireless, NL



"ACOA's investment enabled us to firmly establish our research infrastructure. This allowed us to leverage private and public sector funding. Today, we are able to compete for the best people and take advantage of regional and national funding programs in order to carry out cutting-edge research."

Dr. Rodney Ouellette, Scientific Director, Institut de recherche médicale Beauséjour

and promoting scientific advances and commercialization in biotechnology, applied bio-therapeutics and genetics. With a wide range of research and analysis capabilities, from DNA synthesis to cell culture and in vivo models, the institution's primary focus is the understanding and treatment of cancer.

Established in 1998 with assistance from ACOA and supported through the collaboration of the *Université de Moncton*, the *Corporation Hospitalière Beauséjour* and the *Fondation de l'Hôpital Dr. Georges-L. Dumont*, the facility is a prime example of how partnerships can work to bolster the region's research capacity as well as promote both scientific discovery and the commercialization of new technologies.

The *Institut de recherche* currently employs 25 highly qualified personnel including researchers, medical doctors, nurses, technicians and graduate students.

Atlantic Participation in the Canadian National Site Licensing Project

In 1999, the Canadian Association of Research Libraries initiated a \$50-million project to enable all members of the association, by means of a digital data base, to access a wide range of technical and scientific publications thereby avoiding the prohibitive cost of subscribing to them individually.

The Atlantic Canada portion of the national project is co-ordinated by the Association of Atlantic Universities and has been supported by the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the four Atlantic provincial governments and all of Atlantic Canada's public universities and colleges. The project will provide affordable and accessible digital information for both on- and off-campus researchers in Atlantic Canada. It will clearly serve to increase both the quantity and quality of research conducted in the region and will better enable the universities and colleges to attract well qualified staff and students.

This initiative has also enabled industries and businesses throughout the Atlantic region to access state-of-the-art technology. This represents a critical link in ACOA's innovation strategy to increase activity in and to build capacity for innovation, research and development.

"The Canadian National Site Licensing Project has helped us build R&D capacity. The resulting new information infrastructure has put researchers in smaller universities on a nearly equal footing with those working in larger, more affluent universities in the country. This has been particularly important to regions like Atlantic Canada, where there is a larger proportion of smaller universities than in other parts of the country."

Dr. David Pink, St. Francis Xavier University,
Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Member of the Board
of the Canada Foundation for Innovation



COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

Approximately 46% of the population in Atlantic Canada lives in rural communities and the economic strength of these communities is an essential part of the economic health of the Atlantic region.

Community Economic Development (CED) is a key component of the federal regional development strategy. Within this strategic priority, ACOA's focus is to work with regional and local partners to build community capacity to create viable opportunities for economic development.

ACOA's CED objectives are to: strengthen the co-ordination and co-operation between the Atlantic CED partners; increase the availability of business capital in rural communities; create sustainable jobs in these communities; strengthen the community strategic planning process; and encourage community ownership and empowerment in CED activities.

Approximately 46%⁹ of the population in Atlantic Canada lives in rural communities¹⁰ and the economic strength of these communities is an essential part of the economic health of the Atlantic region. Local involvement has been a cornerstone of ACOA's community-based economic development strategy. The 41 Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs), community controlled non-profit organizations located across Atlantic Canada, have been effective delivery partners in the provision of business capital and counselling to rural communities throughout Atlantic Canada. From April 1, 1995 to March 31, 2002, the CBDCs issued 9,651 loans totalling \$259 million to businesses in their communities, which levered an additional \$253 million in private sector investment financing.

In addition, the Atlantic Investment Partnership has allocated \$135 million over a five-year period for community economic development, specifically targeted to rural development through the Strategic Community Investment Fund.

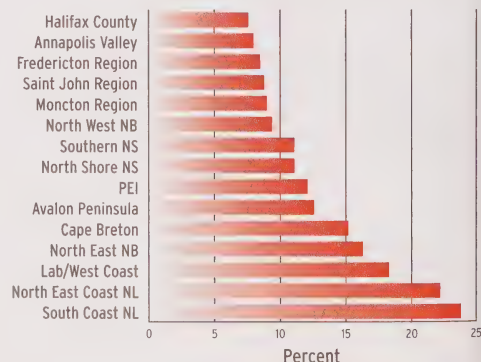
The Business Development Program also continues to invest heavily in rural initiatives, with approximately 65% of assistance directed to rural businesses or economic development organizations outside metropolitan areas.

The Agency remains active in the co-ordination of federal government activity in communities throughout the Atlantic. Through its partnership with the 52 Regional Economic Development Organizations (REDOs) in Atlantic Canada, ACOA has fostered a co-operative environment in the areas of community enterprise and business development. This network of REDOs is made up of 20 Regional Economic Development Boards in Newfoundland and Labrador; 13 Regional Development Authorities in Nova Scotia; 15 Community Economic Development Agencies in New Brunswick; and 4 Community Economic Development Corporations in Prince Edward Island. In all cases, these organizations are incorporated, under provincial legislation, as private sector not-for-profit corporations reporting to a local Board of Directors. They are responsible for the development and implementation of co-ordinated strategic and operational plans for the specific area of the province covered by their mandates.

The role and structure of the Atlantic REDOs have evolved according to experience and circumstances. ACOA has been an active player in building the CED network in the region providing information, expertise, professional technical support and targeted funding.

Figure 10

Unemployment is Predominantly a Rural Issue – 2002 Unemployment Rates



Source: Statistics Canada – Labour Force Survey

⁹ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

¹⁰ The population for rural areas is defined as the provincial residual or the total provincial population minus the population for urban areas. Urban areas are defined as those areas that have a minimum concentration of 1,000 persons and a population density of at least 400 persons per square kilometre.



COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - THE CONTEXT

While the overall economy of the Atlantic region has fared quite well over the past five years, unemployment and rural depopulation remain significant challenges for

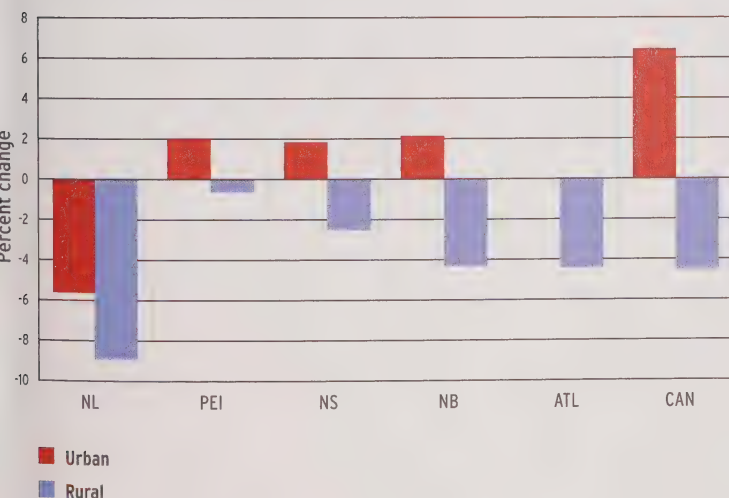
Atlantic Canada. Among rural areas, unemployment rates remain quite high in Cape Breton, northeastern New Brunswick, and areas beyond the Avalon Peninsula in Newfoundland and Labrador.

As noted in **Figure 11**, population gains in urban areas within the Atlantic provinces have been modest, while

rural areas recorded declines between 1996 and 2001. The relative lack of employment opportunities within rural areas has contributed to out-migration of young people as they pursue post-secondary education and better job prospects. This urbanization trend has also been evident for the country as a whole. In Newfoundland and Labrador, much sharper declines were recorded in both rural and urban areas, reflecting a continuation of the adjustments resulting from major fisheries declines early in the 1990s. With the substantial loss in

Figure 11

Population Growth - Urban/Rural Atlantic Canada and Canada, 1996-2001



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

Newfoundland and Labrador (7%), the overall population in Atlantic Canada declined by 2.1% between 1996 and 2001, compared with a 4% increase for the country as a whole.

ACOA - WORKING FOR COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACOA's involvement in CED takes place within a framework of priorities and activities that are adapted to local needs and opportunities. For the Agency, CED represents a myriad of partnership arrangements and dynamic networks that are the lifeblood of the CED process in Atlantic Canada. Following are examples of ACOA's work in CED across the region.

Community Economic Development Workshops, Newfoundland and Labrador

Effective January 2000, municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador were granted legislative authority to undertake economic development within their communities. ACOA responded to an initiative of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities to help prepare municipalities for their role in economic development through a CED workshop.

This initiative was a multi-year, collaborative information and training project. It has adopted a three-phased approach:

- Phase I involved a series of workshops based on reorienting and reorganizing the knowledge-base of community economic development;
- Phase II comprised a series of Practical - Skills Development workshops; and
- Phase III involved workshops on Applications - Learning from Best Practices, drawing on lessons learned from a series of study tours on local government involvement in community economic development in five jurisdictions (Iceland, Scotland, Sweden, Kentucky and Northern British Columbia).

This initiative continues to have many positive results. At the request of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, a presentation was made at the 2001 Annual General Meeting on this initiative as an example of direct federal/local government collaboration. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development also highlighted this initiative in its *Territorial Review of Canada (2002)* as a successful federal regional policy approach to stimulating local development.

At the local level, the initiative has benefited about 200 of the 291 incorporated municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador. The fact that the workshops were all delivered by elected municipal councillors has been very important. Rather than hiring an outside facilitator, councillors themselves invested the time and effort to learn and present the materials to each other.

This initiative has allowed ACOA to work with local and regional stakeholders in support of integrated economic development planning and implementation. Through supplying timely, pertinent and needed information, it has assisted local governments to become active and valuable partners in this process.

Information Technology Operations Facility, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia

Register.com, founded in 1994 in New York to register domain names on the Internet, and the community of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, founded in 1761 to provide a domain for settlers, have become friends and partners. The partnership took a few years to solidify and involved many participants from economic development agencies, municipalities, educational institutions, elected decision makers and government. The result of the co-operation is a successful call centre in Yarmouth, providing satisfying and stable employment for over 200 individuals in the new economy and securing a place on the map for the Southwest Shore region of Nova Scotia. ACOA's contribution of \$950,000 was provided to the Yarmouth and Area Industrial Commission, which remains owner of the IT building where the call centre is in full operation. The building is considered to be a key piece of community infrastructure, and serves as evidence of the community's ability to create impressive innovative solutions to business opportunities. David Hill, Director of Canadian Operations for Register.com, noted that employee turnover rates are well below the industry average.

The project to provide a facility for Register.com also enabled the community to upgrade its communications infrastructure, which is being used to attract new complementary operations requiring high-speed data connectivity. Frank Anderson, Chief Executive Officer of the Southwest Shore Development Authority and prime mover to create this success story, notes that the benefits to the community and region will accrue for many years to come. They are now using this co-operation to promote the Southwest Shore region of Nova Scotia as a good place to live and invest.

Sydney Mines Renewal Association, Cape Breton

September 2002 marked the announcement of the third and final phase of a community-driven, commercial-core revitalization project in Sydney Mines.

Spearheaded by the Sydney Mines Renewal Association (SMRA), in partnership with all levels of government and the private sector, infrastructure improvements to enhance the image and economic viability of the downtown core were a welcome announcement for the people of Sydney Mines.

The town of Sydney Mines has been severely impacted by the closure of the coal industry on Cape Breton Island. The Sydney Mines Renewal Association is endeavouring to turn the fortunes of this community around.

SMRA comprises clergy from five main churches within the community and was established in 1998. Its focus is to foster economic development and renewal projects in the downtown core of Sydney Mines and to improve the social and economic well-being of the entire community.

Community support and participation in the revitalization project has been overwhelming. To date, approximately 24 businesses in Sydney Mines have committed to the community façade improvement program and are undergoing business enhancements. Two Green Area Enhancement and eight Signage projects are currently underway, with more projects scheduled to commence in the fall of 2003.

Eastern Kings Community Enhancement Corporation, Prince Edward Island

This CED project involved the restoration of an historic building in Souris, Prince Edward Island. The Matthew McLean building was built in 1869 by local entrepreneurs Uriah Matthew and John McLean and served as a major commercial centre for eastern Prince Edward Island for more than 100 years.

The Town of Souris purchased the building in 2000 and the Eastern Kings Community Enhancement Corporation, a local volunteer development group, assumed the

responsibility to refurbish it completely. Part of the space will be used for an interpretive exhibit highlighting the history and culture of the area. A significant amount of space has been leased on a long-term basis to the provincial government for a Visitors' Information Centre and to two private sector businesses – a craft shop and a restaurant.

ACOA worked closely with the Province of Prince Edward Island, Human Resources Development Canada, the Town of Souris and the Eastern Kings Community Enhancement Corporation as this project was planned, financed and implemented. This was a highly successful community project that garnered much interest from residents and visitors in the area. The project itself was identified in a strategic tourism plan prepared for the area and the volunteers who worked on the project did an excellent job, which has encouraged others in the area to become involved in community development projects.

"A revitalized downtown core is the cornerstone to future economic opportunities for Sydney Mines. Without the partnerships with all levels of government as well as private property owners, our dream could never have been realized."

Rev. Karen Ralph, Chair of Sydney Mines Renewal Association

CED Symposium

In New Brunswick, through a consultative approach with ACOA, the Province of New Brunswick and the key economic development stakeholders, a new CED model was implemented in 2002-2003 and 15 Community Economic Development Agencies

(CEDAs) were created to replace the 13 Regional Economic Development Commissions (REDCs). This new model involved a higher level of community input with a greater emphasis on strategic planning and increased accountability. It was anticipated that communities would be better able to strengthen their economic base in a sustainable and strategic manner through this revised approach.

Given the new CEDA environment, as well as ongoing challenges of community economic development, ACOA's regional office in New Brunswick organized a symposium in 2002 to bring together the economic development partners with the objective to provide ideas and enhance awareness to stimulate development, investment and job creation. A key message of the event was to encourage communities to take the lead and responsibility for their own economic development. Close to 200 economic development professionals participated in the event, which provided momentum for the new CED approach and an excellent networking opportunity.

The event brought together the three levels of government, community representatives and volunteers to exchange information, hear success stories from other jurisdictions and discuss new ideas for building strong prosperous communities.

"This technology gives the network of 41 Community Business Development Corporations, located in rural communities throughout Atlantic Canada, the most progressive computerized administrative and loan management systems among the Community Futures Development Corporations across Canada."

Basil Ryan, Chief Executive Officer,
Atlantic Canada Community
Business Investment Fund

The Exceptional Assistant

As part of ACOA's commitment to long-term, community-based economic development, the Agency made a contribution of \$1.3 million to implement The Exceptional Assistant (TEA) on a region-wide basis. This Internet-based software technology will manage and streamline computer-

ized administrative and loan management processes. The project will assist CBDs in providing better and faster service to SME clients in their communities.

Seed Capital ConneXion Program for Young Entrepreneurs

Throughout Atlantic Canada, ACOA continues to provide loans to young entrepreneurs through its Seed Capital ConneXion Program for Young Entrepreneurs. To ensure the greatest possible rural access, the program is delivered by the 41 CBDs (and six other delivery agents in urban areas). About 80% of the loans have been made in rural areas. More information on this program is available on ACOA's Web site at:
<http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/e/financial/capital.shtml>.

1998-1999 to 2002-2003 Seed Capital ConneXion Program for Young Entrepreneurs:

- issued nearly 2,147 loans;
- provided \$21.8 million in assistance; and
- achieved \$45.7 million additional leveraging.

An example of the Seed Capital ConneXion Program for Young Entrepreneurs at work is the Pilothouse Café and Cottages project¹¹. Brian Johnson and Johanna Verhagen are realizing their dream, which they were not sure would come true following the nightmare of September 11, 2001. After nine months of research and planning, Brian and Johanna were about to begin renovations and construction on their café and five cottages in St. Margaret's Bay when they suddenly found themselves in the shadow of a dismal forecast for this year's Nova Scotia tourism industry.



¹¹ Summer 2002 Issue *Youth Seed ConneXion*, Nova Scotia Association of CBDs.

Believing in their idea, they persevered. They received encouragement and assistance through the Seed Capital ConneXion Program, a business assistance program for young people that they accessed through Blue Water Business Development Corporation in Musquodoboit Harbour.

Through this program, they got “great business advice, and the kind of support and encouragement you need through the learning process.” Johanna learned to use guest management/reservation software through a training grant from Seed Capital ConneXion Program. Brian supervised the large-scale renovations that would transform the old, landmark property.

In May 2002, Brian and Johanna opened Pilothouse Café & Cottages. To their relief, they have enjoyed a high percentage of bookings much earlier than they had expected. They look forward to employing even more local suppliers and talent to contribute Maritime flavour, décor, and hospitality to their new venture. In the meantime, they credit their Blue Water connection, John Cooke, with “taking support to another level.” Says Brian, “He sent us articles, believed in our idea, and always does more than he has to. At Blue Water, they seem as excited as we are.”

OVERVIEW

ACOA has fostered an unprecedented, co-operative, regional approach to tourism development and marketing in Atlantic Canada.

As an economic sector, tourism offers significant wealth and job creation opportunities and builds on exhibited regional strengths, especially the attractive natural environment of Atlantic Canada with its coastal beauty and rural landscapes.

As an economic engine, tourism now generates \$3.16 billion annually in "export revenues," \$500 million a year in tax revenues and 100,000 jobs for Atlantic Canadians. As a percentage of GDP, tourism contributes significantly more to the economy of Atlantic Canada (5%) than it does to the national economy (2.5%).

From an economic perspective, tourism demand refers to the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year. It includes leisure time spent touring and sightseeing, visiting with friends and relatives, or taking a vacation. Tourism demand also includes people participating in conventions, conferences and in other kinds of business or professional activities. Tourism supply is a composite of service providers that collectively deliver a travel experience. Tourism supply includes transportation and accommodation providers, restaurants and retail shopping outlets, entertainment and recreation facilities, and other providers of visitor and visitor-related services.

Between 1998 and 2002, tourism projects delivered to SMEs in Atlantic Canada were mainly through the Business Development Program (BDP), COOPERATION agreements with the provincial governments, and the Canadian Fisheries Adjustment and Restructuring Initiative.

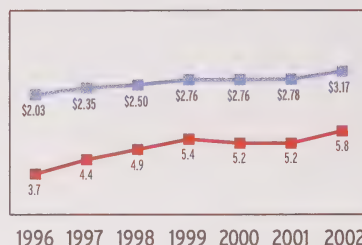
ACOA is a catalyst for tourism innovation in Atlantic Canada. Through its partnerships with tourism industry associations, private sector groups and other governments, ACOA has fostered an unprecedented, co-operative, regional approach to tourism development and marketing in Atlantic Canada. The Agency's leadership has helped to focus the tourism industry's attention on strategic tourism investments and activities that increase profitability, investment and wages in the tourism sector.

ACOA's strategic approach to tourism involves support to projects that:

- extend the tourism season;
- enhance the quality and appeal of the region's tourism products and experiences;
- increase revenues and employment derived from the tourism sector; and
- ensure the sustainability of tourism in Atlantic Canada.

Figure 12

Tourism Revenues and Visits



— Visits (Millions)
— Revenues (\$ billion)

Source: NL, NS, NB, PE Tourism Departments

ACOA's leadership has contributed to significant growth in tourism in the Atlantic region. Non-resident tourism in Atlantic Canada increased by 57% from 3.7 million province visits in 1996, to 5.8 million in 2002. Tourism-related revenues have increased by 57% from \$2.03 billion in 1996, to \$3.17 billion in 2002. Tourism-related employment increased by 45% from 69,000 jobs in 1999 to 100,000 in 2002.

ACOA is recognized as a leader in developing regional co-operation and co-ordination among stakeholders in the tourism sector. Region-wide initiatives are strategically important as a means of pooling resources and expertise and as a vehicle for more effective global marketing and development of quality products. Three examples are profiled below: the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership, the Best Practices Missions and the Atlantic Canada Technology Initiative.

THE ATLANTIC CANADA TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

The Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership (ACTP) has a mandate to build strong industry-government relationships



Nova Scotia Tourism and Culture

to market Atlantic Canada as a tourism destination in international markets. Marketing strategies aimed at the New England and mid-Atlantic region of the United States, Europe and Japan build upon and enhance the brand equity established by provincial partners and major industry players (transportation providers, travel agents, tour operators, destination marketing organizations) in targeted international markets.

The ACTP is a nine-member partnership comprising ACOA, the four provincial tourism industry associations and the four provincial government departments responsible for tourism. Other ad-hoc, co-operative marketing partnerships with the Canadian Tourism Commission and travel trade operators are also facilitated through ACTP. ACTP completed its third consecutive, three-year project in March 2003.

On average, 83% of ACTP's budget is directed to marketing initiatives in the New England and mid-Atlantic regions of the United States. Twelve percent is directed to selected European (the United Kingdom and German-speaking countries) and Japanese markets. The balance of ACTP's budget (5%) is for the administration of the partnership and delivery of its programs.

Since 1994, the ACTP has generated 662,000 tourism-related information requests that resulted in 159,000 visitor parties who spent \$173.2 million while vacationing in the region.

ACTP has resulted in a significant return on the expenditure of public funds. Each three-year agreement generated approximately \$9.00 in tourist expenditures for every \$1.00 of media purchased.

ACTP is an Atlantic-wide promotional program complemented by province-specific and industry-specific initiatives. ACTP also provided tourism industry stakeholders with a forum for discussing common issues, conducting market research, adopting regional policy positions and developing joint action plans for tourism.

"The Canadian federal government, through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, attracted four provincial governments and members of the tourism industry associations in each province to the table to create a unique and successful partnership that brings a co-ordinated, regional approach to marketing the Atlantic region in export markets."

A Case Study of the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership 2000-2003

Neil Tiley, Project Director, Extension Community Development Co-operative



BEST PRACTICES MISSIONS

Best Practices Missions are learning-based group trips that allow tourism operators from Atlantic Canada to interact with operators outside the region who offer leading-edge products, destinations and experiences. Each mission focusses on a particular theme, which is chosen based on demand for tourism product development within that area of tourism. Participants travel to a destination outside of Atlantic Canada to learn from highly successful operators with tourism products similar to their own. The missions incorporate detailed itineraries that focus on educational seminars and tours of tourism businesses that have been successful in attracting and retaining strong visitation through quality tourism experiences. Past themes have included heritage destinations, culinary tourism, marine/seacoast destinations, trail packaging, birding destinations, outfitter diversification and Aboriginal tourism.

Best Practices Missions enhance the Atlantic region's competitiveness by focussing on in-demand and emerging tourism products that provide the travelling public with the best possible experience. The ultimate goal is that mission participants will return to this region and contribute to improved tourism in Atlantic Canada.

Best Practices Missions bring a co-ordinated, regional approach to improving the product readiness and competitiveness of Atlantic Canada's tourism businesses. The missions encourage investments in tourism products that emphasize seasonality, quality and productivity in the tourism sector.

ATLANTIC CANADA TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE

The Atlantic Canada Technology Initiative (ACTI) was a two-year pilot project (2000-2002) directed at integrating information technology (IT) into the tourism industry in Atlantic Canada. ACTI brought a co-ordinated regional approach to assist the region's tourism industry in adopting e-commerce and Internet technologies.

ACTI assisted private sector tourism operators in areas such as Web-based resources, business-to-business technology, business-to-consumer technology, e-commerce and marketing through technology. The activities of the ACTI centred around three core initiatives involving education and training, technical support, advocacy and promotion. Education and training included workshops and seminars covering various aspects of Web and business-based information technology. Technical assistance included in-house support to the region's four tourism industry associations as well as support to tourism sub groups and individual tourism operators. Advocacy and promotion included activities that enhanced the tourism industry's awareness and knowledge of the benefits of information technology and encouraged tourism operators to adopt or enhance IT capabilities.

"The Atlantic Canada Technology Initiative has had a great impact on the ability of our sector to be competitive in the on-line and worldwide marketplace."

Jan Wheeler, President, Nova Scotia
Bed & Breakfast Association

ACTI was a partnership involving of ACOA and the four tourism industry associations in Atlantic Canada. The four provincial departments responsible for tourism also participated in the ACTI project by supporting education, training and research initiatives consistent with provincial strategies. The ACTI involved an investment

of \$800,000, cost shared between ACOA (60%), the industry (35%) and provincial governments (5%).

The ACTI was an effective, grassroots project that surpassed all of its goals and objectives. The Atlantic tourism industry has made significant advancements in its adoption of Internet technologies and e-commerce as a result of ACOA's support of the project:

- 80% of the Atlantic region's tourism businesses had adopted computer technology as a business tool by 2002, compared with 64% in 1999.
- 79% of the Atlantic region's tourism businesses were connected to the Internet in 2002, compared with 17% in 1999.
- 87% of the Atlantic region's tourism businesses were involved in business-to-consumer e-commerce and 65% involved in business-to-business e-commerce in 2002, compared with 42% for both in 1999.

Progress in the adoption of Internet technology involved the delivery of 32 technology-related workshops, 8 Web-based discussion forums, direct communications with 4,000 operators and a Web-based help desk / information resource, used by 2,400 tourism operators.

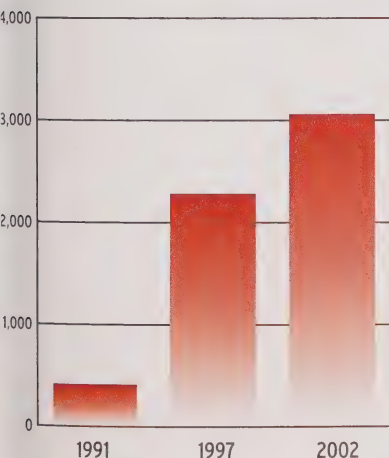
TOWARD QUALITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Tourist visitations to Atlantic Canada increased by 57% between 1996 and 2002, creating incremental demand for roofed accommodations. Recognizing the need for sustainable development and a focus on SMEs, ACOA's BDP has offered assistance for the establishment, expansion and modernization of quality tourist accommodations having the potential: (i) to attract new visitations to the region; (ii) to extend length-of-stay; (iii) to increase tourism related spending; and (iv) to improve the travellers' satisfaction with the region's accommodations.

ACOA's strategic approach to roofed accommodations was premised on the Canada Select Star Grading Program. In addition to the regular program criteria, eligibility for ACOA assistance required that applicants achieve a minimum, three-star Canada Select accommodation rating for new establishments, and a minimum, one-half star increase for applicants seeking to expand or modernize existing roofed accommodations.

Figure 13

Accommodations Graded in Atlantic Canada



Source: Atlantic Canada Tourism Grading Authority

Partnerships were engaged with the Atlantic Canada Tourism Grading Authority (established in 1990 and mandated to promote / standardize the grading of roofed accommodations in Atlantic Canada) and the four provincial tourism industry associations responsible for delivery of the Canada Select program in order to ensure the effective implementation of the grading standards.

With the number of graded accommodations increasing from 415 in 1991 to 3,063 in 2002, the tourism industry's ability to grow, prosper and remain competitive nationally and internationally was substantially strengthened.

Overall, ACOA investments in this area have:

- increased the availability of year-round tourist accommodations in Atlantic Canada;
- contributed to extended lengths of stay;
- increased the availability of roofed accommodations in strategic geographic areas;
- provided access to the small conventions market; and
- contributed to the development of sustainable tourism communities in Atlantic Canada.

Following are profiles of two projects that exemplify the Agency's strategic approach to the development of accommodations in Atlantic Canada.

Quaco Inn, St. Martins, New Brunswick
St. Martins' Quaco Inn has welcomed thousands of visitors since the early 1980s. Since 1993, ACOA has worked

with Quaco's owners to develop and upgrade the more than century-old facilities. Most recently, in 1999, the Agency helped innkeepers Rudy and Kather Miller-Zinn to add a gothic-style building to the establishment. The addition helped the Inn to maintain its four-star rating under the province's new grading system and to accommodate ever-growing visitor demand.

"The Newfoundland and Labrador Accommodations Rating Council has been a real success story. In 1993, we were given ACOA funding and by 1997, the Council became self-sufficient. The Star rating of Newfoundland and Labrador accommodations has increased by 72% over the 1994-2001 period."

Bruce Sparks, Chairman, Newfoundland and Labrador Accommodations Rating Council

Rosewood Cottages, Hubbards, Nova Scotia

Rosewood Cottages, owned and operated by Phyllis Hind Holdings Ltd., is a waterfront property comprising 1.25 acres of land in the resort area of Hubbards, Nova Scotia.

The project investments involving repayable assistance from ACOA were in two parts: first, construction of two 2-bedroom cottages and, second, renovations that included winterizing several cottages and converting a house located on the property to a five-room inn.

The Rosewood Cottages investment has increased the availability of year-round tourist accommodations in the Hubbards area along Nova Scotia's picturesque South Shore. The availability of quality accommodations, which fit the market demand for seaside cottages, contributes to extending visitors' length of stay in the province, especially in the local community of Hubbards. The winterization of the cottages has enabled the business to expand its operating season through the shoulder and winter months bringing visitors to the Hubbards area during a typically low period of tourism activity in the year. The investments enabled the client to increase its Canada Select rating to a four-star level.

This last expansion enabled us to develop and accommodate new group markets and extend our season well beyond two summer months."

Rudy Zinn
Quaco Inn, St. Martin's NB

organizations, non-profit organizations and museums. All are key stakeholders in the strategy to expand and modernize the region's cultural and heritage experiences.

ACOA's investments in cultural tourism have:

- contributed to extended lengths of stay in Atlantic Canada;
- increased the availability of experiential cultural and heritage products in strategic geographic areas; and
- successfully contributed to the development of sustainable tourism communities in Atlantic Canada.

The College of Piping and Celtic Performing Arts of Canada in Prince Edward Island and the Colony of Avalon Archaeological Site in Newfoundland and Labrador exemplify ACOA's strategic approach to cultural and heritage tourism in Atlantic Canada.

The College of Piping and Celtic Performing Arts of Canada, Summerside, Prince Edward Island

Located in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, the College of Piping and Celtic Performing Arts of Canada was established in 1990. With more than 70% of Islanders being of Scottish or Irish ancestry, it appeared fitting to have the College located in this province. The mission of the College is to provide quality educational programming in the Celtic performing arts. It is the only institution of its kind in North America and is affiliated with the College of Piping in Glasgow, Scotland.

The College includes an outdoor amphitheatre, library/resource centre, mirrored dance studios, a practice hall, classrooms, soundproof practice rooms and a gift shop. The student body of the College has grown from just 30 in 1990 to more than 300. While the College is in the business of producing Celtic performing artists, it plays a major role in providing a quality cultural tourism product, which contributes significantly to the economic impact of tourism in Prince Edward Island. The concerts alone provided a cultural experience for over 7,800 visitors to Prince Edward Island in 2001. ACOA made a major investment involving a three-year marketing plan for the College, as well as development of interpretative displays and complete exterior upgrades to enhance the attractiveness of the facility to tourists. Other funding partners include the City of Summerside, the Prince Edward Island Department of Development and the R. Howard Webster Foundation.

SHOWCASING ATLANTIC CANADA'S HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Cultural and heritage tourism presents great opportunities for the tourism industry in Atlantic Canada. Provincial tourism statistics indicate 37% of all trips to Atlantic Canada include a cultural/heritage component, and the market is growing at a rate of 8% a year.

Recognizing the significance of Atlantic Canada's culture and heritage experiences, BDP offered assistance for the establishment, expansion and modernization of interactive cultural and heritage experiences that support ACOA's strategic approach to tourism.

As part of this regional approach, partnerships have been formed with Canadian Heritage, Parks Canada, the four provincial government departments responsible for tourism, and various municipal governments. Partnerships with the private sector have involved destination marketing

In 2002, the College's Celtic Festival was honoured as a Provincial Attractions Canada winner in the categories of Cultural Event and Attraction of National or International Significance. The College was able to expand its summer concert series to five evenings per week in 2002, and attendance increased by 19% over the previous year. Concert revenues increased by 32% and gift shop sales increased by 10.9% when compared with 2001. The College has also been named to the American Bus Association's Annual List of the "Top 100 Events for 2003."

Colony of Avalon Archaeological Site Development, Newfoundland and Labrador

The Colony of Avalon Foundation was incorporated in 1995 as a non-profit, community-based organization mandated to investigate, preserve and develop the archaeological remains of Lord Baltimore's Colony of Avalon, and other 16th and 17th century remains in Ferryland, along the south coast of the island of Newfoundland. The Colony of Avalon Foundation includes over 200 members. Since 1996, ACOA has contributed approximately \$3 million toward the development of this site.

Excavations have unearthed the remains of eight structures and revealed extensive defensive works and over one million artifacts. Some of the 17th century structures excavated include: the Forge, built by the first settlers in the summer of 1622; a warehouse located on the original waterfront and dating from the early years of the settlement; and two mid-century dwellings and a barn/byre complex burned by the French in 1696.

The Foundation's efforts to cultivate the Colony of Avalon into a world-class heritage attraction of provincial, national and international importance

have exceeded expectations. Tourism-related visits to the site increased from fewer than 2,000 visitors in 1992 to over 22,000 in 2001. Incremental spending by visitors to the Colony of Avalon is estimated at \$1.8 million.

"ACOA has been very supportive of our endeavours to market the College to students and tourists alike, resulting in a significant return on that investment."

Scott MacAulay,
Director of The College of Piping and
Celtic Performing Arts of Canada

Other economic benefits associated with the site include a \$1.25 million contribution to provincial GDP and about 50 person years of employment. As additional archaeological discoveries are made and new attractions are developed, the economic benefits derived from the site will continue to grow.

VALUING NATURE

Nature tourism presents wide-ranging opportunities for the tourism industry in Atlantic Canada. Provincial tourism statistics indicate that 85% of all trips to Atlantic Canada include a nature-based component. Recognizing the significance of Atlantic Canada's natural tourism products, ACOA has invested in nature-based experiences having the potential: (i) to attract new visitations to the region; (ii) to extend lengths of stay; (iii) to increase tourism-related spending; and (iv) to improve the travellers' satisfaction with the region's tourism offerings.

The development of Isle Madame in Cape Breton and the East Coast Trail initiative on Newfoundland represent two examples of ACOA's strategic investments in nature-based tourism.

Development of Isle Madame Association Inc.'s, Cape Auget Eco-Trail, Isle Madame, Cape Breton

In February 1995, Development Isle Madame Association (DIMA) was born of a strategic planning exercise, initiated upon the collapse of the ground fishery in the early 1990s, impacting 350 direct and 1,000 indirect jobs, out of a workforce of 1,800. The Association is a community-owned, non-profit limited company that is run by Board of Directors to contribute to the community's goals and

priorities. DIMA was instrumental in bringing the idea of eco-tourism to Isle Madame and it was this vision that has helped to make the Cape Auget Trail one of Cape Breton's most visited and scenic hiking trails.

"The development of the Cape Auget Trail provides yet another reason for visitors to stop and savour all that Isle Madame has to offer."

Brenda Martell,
Acting Executive Director of the Development
Isle Madame Association

The Cape Auget Trail has elevations as high as 150 feet, along beaches and rocky shores. Historically, significant boundary lines and foundations can be found along the major coves of the area. There are abandoned Acadian settlements that existed for a period of two hundred years. Other notable features include shipwrecks and whale sightings.

"The changes wrought by the East Coast Trail Association in the landscape of the Avalon and the opportunities that residents and visitors have to enjoy it strikes me as the single best improvement in 'quality of life' that I have observed during my time here."

Judith Adler,
Department of Sociology,
Memorial University of Newfoundland

The trail connects two national historic sites, 22 communities, two provincial parks, plus ecological reserves and heritage sites. The trail has generated attention from international tour operators and media. The East Coast Trail Association is membership-based and brings to the project an enormous amount of volunteer effort. The Association plans to extend the trail, particularly in the area north of St. John's.

The East Coast Trail, Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland and Labrador

The east coast of Newfoundland and Labrador's Avalon Peninsula is a remarkable blend of history, nature and scenery, and a perfect place for the hiking enthusiast. The East Coast Trail Association has worked with ACOA, HRDC and the provincial government to create the East Coast Trail, connecting much of the eastern Avalon Peninsula with a network of hiking trails.

The Association has completed the core section of the East Coast Trail, a 220-kilometre, international-calibre hiking trail linking St. John's to the Town of Cappahayden on the province's southern shore.

Work on the trail has included bridging small streams, building boardwalks and stairs, and installing stone work at selected sites. The Association has also designed and installed signage and trailhead facilities.

The cost of the work on this section of the trail was \$1.6 million. Of this amount, ACOA and the provincial government contributed \$1.1 million through the component of the Fisheries Adjustment and Restructuring Measures for Economic Development, a federal-provincial cost-shared agreement.



OVERVIEW

Over the past five years, the Agency has assisted over 400 firms attempting to become new exporters

Over the past few years, strong national and regional economies and liberalized trade agreements have provided the impetus for export growth among Atlantic Canada's business community. With fewer than three percent of the Atlantic region's SMEs involved in export activity, it was fitting for ACOA to take measures aimed at increasing the level of export activity. To increase the numbers of exporting SMEs, a comprehensive strategy focussing on developing exporting capabilities and on identifying and developing market and sector potential was required.

The Agency has introduced an investment component to its strategic priorities aimed at increasing the amount of foreign investment in the region's economy. An Atlantic-wide approach was necessary to ensure that the efforts of Atlantic-based trade and investment partners were working effectively and efficiently toward common objectives.

ACOA's pan-Atlantic Trade and Investment Strategy is built on four economic development tools: the Business Development Program (BDP); the COOPERATION Program; the International Business Development Agreement (IBDA); and the Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (ATIP). Through the strategic combination of these instruments, ACOA, together with its partners, strives to increase the region's total export output by: creating greater awareness of exporting as a growth strategy for SMEs; promoting and supporting export skill development among potential and existing exporting firms and business consultants; providing access to financing for SMEs and industry and business associations; and generating more knowledge on the export development needs and sectoral export capability of the region's export community.

Over the past five years, the Agency has assisted over 400 firms attempting to become new exporters. The recent evaluation of the BDP reports that first-time exporters assisted by the BDP are meeting with considerable success, with two-thirds entering the export market and reporting

significant increases in exports and employment. Furthermore, follow-up surveys indicate that close to 80% of BDP clients who became new exporters in 1998 and 1999 are still successfully exporting¹². By comparison, about one-half of new Canadian exporters continue to export over a three to four year period¹³.

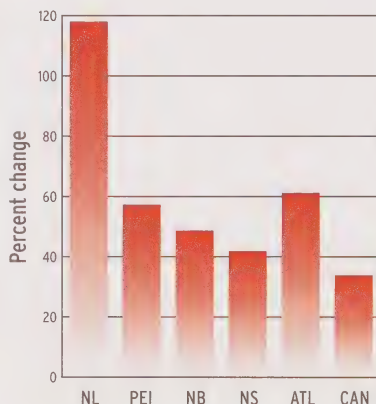
Within its Atlantic Investment Development Strategy, ACOA focusses on four strategic areas: generating and supporting more regionally relevant investment research; enhancing the level of information management and dissemination among key investment stakeholders; raising the region's profile by promoting Atlantic Canada among target audiences as a profitable place to do business; and establishing investment attraction and development partnerships among other federal departments, provincial governments and the private sector.

MEETING THE COMPETITIVE CHALLENGE - ATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

Exports of primary and manufactured goods increased from \$11.6 billion in 1997 to \$19.7 billion in 2002, a gain of 70% over the five-year period. Foreign exports of commodities now account for 30% of the region's GDP, up from 23% in 1997. Newfoundland and Labrador posted the greatest gains in exports, increasing by 118%, or almost \$3 billion over the period (see Figure 14).

Figure 14

Export Growth - Atlantic Provinces and Canada, 1997-2002



Source: Industry Canada, Strategis

¹² BDP Supported First-Time Exporters, ACOA Survey 2002.

¹³ Statistics Canada - A Profile of Canadian Exporters 1993-1997, August 2000.



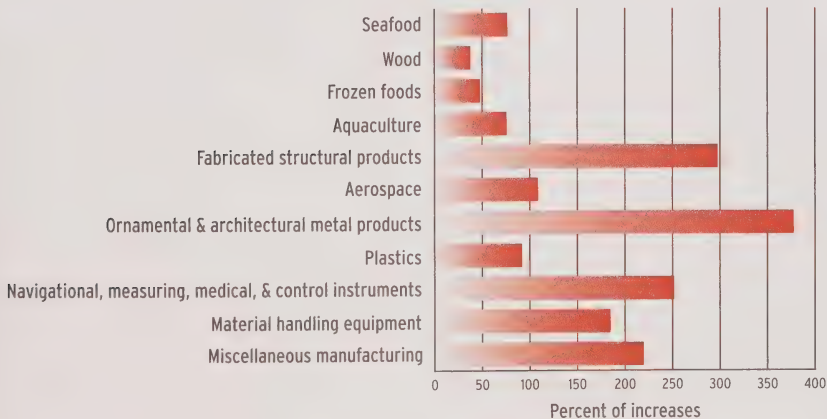
Not surprisingly, oil and gas and refined petroleum accounted for the largest share of the increase over the period.

However, very substantial increases were recorded in a wide range of other products, accounting for \$2.94 billion in increased export sales as shown in **Figure 15**.

According to Statistics Canada, there were 1,980 exporters in Atlantic Canada in 2001, up 22% from 1,618 exporters in 1993.

ACOA has played an important leadership and co-ordination role in support of the strategic priorities of trade and investment. During the 1998-2003 period, ACOA has been instrumental in mounting four key region-wide initiatives: Team Canada Atlantic, the \$8-million renewal of the Canada/Atlantic Provinces COOPERATION Agreement on International Business Development (IBDA), the Pan-Atlantic Investment Co-ordination Committee, and the KPMG *Competitive Alternatives Study*.

Figure 15
Export Growth



Source: Industry Canada, Strategies

Working Together - Team Canada Atlantic Trade and Investment Missions

Team Canada Atlantic (TCA) Trade and Investment missions are a part of a regional initiative led by ACOA, under the Agency's ATIP. The TCA missions are led by either the Prime Minister and the four Atlantic Premiers, or the Minister of State for ACOA and provincial ministers. Typically, the missions include up to 60 of the region's most promising exporting enterprises from a variety of business sectors.

The TCA format was designed to increase trade and investment between businesses in Atlantic Canada and strategic foreign markets. Since its inception in 1999, the TCA program has targeted strategic markets along the eastern-U.S. seaboard. A total of seven TCA missions have been held to date, two of which were led by the Prime Minister. Markets visited include New England, Atlanta and New York.

TCA is a co-operative effort involving ACOA, the four provincial governments, the federal Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Industry Canada, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, and Team Canada (when missions include the Prime Minister). A TCA Secretariat, housed within ACOA, is responsible for co-ordinating and implementing TCA missions in consultation with the organizing committee that comprises all of the TCA partners. ACOA provides approximately 75% of the funding of the TCA missions under the BDP (non-commercial), with the balance of the financing coming from the four provincial governments and the participating companies. A small financial contribution is provided by Agriculture and Agri-food Canada for a specific mission event.

There has been a total of seven trade missions to Atlanta, New England and New York since the TCA program began in 1999. The missions have enabled more than 250 Atlantic Canadian firms to meet with over 1900 U.S. buyers, agents, and business owners from across the United States, helping to generate \$20 million in confirmed sales and more than \$75 million in projected sales¹⁴.

Co-operating with partners - Canada/Atlantic Provinces COOPERATION Agreement on International Business Development

The Canada/Atlantic Provinces COOPERATION Agreement on International Business Development (IBDA) is a collaborative effort between the federal government and the governments of the four Atlantic provinces. Partners to the agreement include ACOA, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Industry Canada, Business New Brunswick, Nova Scotia Business Inc., PEI Business Development Inc., and Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Industry, Trade and Rural Development. ACOA is funding the federal share of the agreement at 70%, the Provinces' share is 30%.

An ACOA initiative, the IBDA was initially signed in 1994 for \$2 million over three years. It has been extended twice – in 1997 for an additional \$3 million, and in 2000 for \$8 million with a sunset date of April 2004. Now in its ninth year, the IBDA has supported projects aimed at introducing Atlantic companies to the potential of exporting as

a means of expanding and increasing their sales, developing new markets for existing exporters and increasing sales in existing markets. This has been accomplished through four strategic elements: training and awareness; planning and research; market information and intelligence; and international business development activities.

Priority sectors include building products, environmental industries, informa-

tion and communications technologies, life sciences, ocean industries, plastics, and value-added food products. Targeted markets include the United States, Western Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Japan.

Over 80 projects involving close to 1,300 companies were approved from fiscal year 1998-1999 to 2002-2003, totalling \$4.9 million in funding assistance. The latest survey¹⁵ indicates that 21% have started exporting to new markets, 30% have increased their volume of exporting to current markets, and 48% have identified potential new markets.

After participating in two Team Canada Atlantic missions to New York City in 2002, PEI's Jerry Bidgood, General Manager, Prince Edward Aqua Farms Inc., estimates his business has managed to generate sales of more than \$250,000. "Once you've cracked the exporting door open, the opportunities are tremendous."

¹⁴ Source: Team Canada Atlantic Surveys and Follow-up surveys May-July 2003

¹⁵ IBDA Survey, June 2002



Focussing on Investment: The Pan-Atlantic Investment Co-ordination Committee

In early 2000, the ACOA-led Pan-Atlantic Investment Co-ordination Committee (PAICC) was established in recognition of the advantages of fostering closer co-operation and co-ordination with regard to investment activities in Atlantic Canada. The committee includes ACOA, the four Atlantic provinces, Industry Canada and Investment Partnerships Canada.

One of the challenges of attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to Atlantic Canada stems from the size of the region in relation to its competitors. The pooling of financial and human resources enables the region to have a greater impact with promotional and awareness FDI initiatives and activities such as marketing, investment missions and incoming investment tours.

The establishment of the committee has led to strategic regional investment initiatives including the following:

2002 Relocation Summit, Washington, D.C.

The Relocation Summit, a matchmaking event for economic development solution providers and corporate management delegates, was attended by representatives from the PAICC. The conference was limited to 100 senior-level executives from the *Fortune 500* corporations, and representatives from 15 development agencies (including ACOA) and the four Atlantic provinces. The participating company delegates had decision-making authority on a broad range of corporate relocation issues and represented key sectors such as information communications technology, biotechnology, consumer electronics and advanced manufacturing.

Each Atlantic representative participated in various networking opportunities as well as approximately 15 official meetings with corporate management delegates who had indicated they had corporate expansion plans. Follow-up by committee representatives on potential projects and investment opportunities is ongoing.

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade U.S. Investment Counsellors' Meeting, September 2002

The PAICC organized, in tandem with the 34th Annual Economic Development Association of Canada Conference, a meeting in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, with 14 Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade U.S. Investment Counsellors. The meeting provided an opportunity to increase the awareness of Atlantic Canada as an investment location, and served to update the counsellors on the region's investment activities. Foreign direct investment testimonials were presented by three U.S. companies with establishments in Atlantic Canada (Urban Machinery, Honeywell and Sepracor) in addition to presentations by ACOA and the four Atlantic provinces.

Investment Media Promotion

In 2001-2002, ACOA completed a media campaign of investment promotion advertisements in selected U.S. and European site selector and sector magazines. The series of advertisements were produced under the theme "Atlantic Canada: A Profitable Place to do Business." E-business CD cards on the energy and biotechnology sectors and a KPMG Atlantic Canada brochure were also produced for distribution to investment partners and key contacts. A reference document for decision makers and site selectors was also created and distributed through targeted direct marketing. An Atlantic Canada investment Web site has also been created and is found at: www.acoa.gc.ca/invest.

"Since attending Americana 2001 in Montreal as part of an IBDA-sponsored delegation, Agri Plas Systems has been deluged with expressions of interest from potential trading partners around the world, including New England, California and New Zealand."

Austin Boyd, President
Agri Plas Systems 2001, Stratford, PEI



Benchmarking for Investment – The KPMG Competitive Alternatives Study

The KPMG Competitive Alternatives is a biennial comprehensive study comparing business costs in cities with populations of more than 100,000 throughout Austria, France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States and Japan.

The Agency participated as a sponsor in both the 1999 and 2001 studies in an effort to ensure the inclusion of Atlantic Canadian communities. Eighty-six cities were featured in the 2001 report, with Moncton and Halifax being the only Atlantic Canadian communities included in the group.

In a subsequent cost model study¹⁶, six other Atlantic Canadian communities were added to the expanded list of 115 cities in 2001. These were Charlottetown, Fredericton, St. John's, Saint John, Sydney and Truro. Atlantic Canada cities ranked amongst the highest in overall cost competitiveness within Canada and abroad.

The ACOA sponsorship guaranteed access to the details of the study and the corresponding investment cost model. In addition, the Agency hosted an interactive information and training session on the use of the cost model for provincial and federal investment officers as well as the eight Atlantic municipalities covered in the KPMG study.

ACOA, in conjunction with KPMG, produced an Atlantic Canada promotional brochure in early 2002 to highlight and promote the region's cost advantages. The brochure was widely distributed to key investment stakeholders in Canada and abroad and selected Canadian Consulates in the U.S. and Europe. The brochure has been used as a promotional tool of the TCA Trade and Investment missions.

With Canada having the top eight international cities in overall cost competitiveness, including Halifax and

Moncton, this study was a key investment attraction tool for Canada and the Atlantic region. It generated significant profile among the U.S. and European investment communities, highlighting Atlantic Canada as a profitable place to do business. It also assisted federal and provincial officers in developing the skills necessary to optimize their impact on potential investors, and provided opportunities to strengthen

strategic relationships with Investment Partnerships Canada, the Atlantic provinces and municipalities.

EXPANDING THE EXPORT BASE

With fewer than 3% of Atlantic SMEs currently engaged in export activities, it is vital for the growth of incomes and employment in the region that more companies succeed in the international marketplace as exporters of goods and services. Accordingly, the Agency is giving particular priority to building the export base of businesses in the region through a variety of specific

measures to build export experience and success. Following are profiles of five initiatives on exporting involving ACOA and trade partners.

Business Networks for Trade Expansion – Newfoundland and Labrador

The Newfoundland and Labrador Business Networks initiative fostered the establishment of business networks to pool their resources in order to seize commercial opportunities beyond the marketing, production or distribution capabilities of individual firms. This initiative has enabled SMEs to pursue specific market opportunities in national and international markets, facilitate the development and commercialization of new technologies, as well as improve the management, marketing and production capabilities of SMEs.

An eligible network was required to have at least three participants with the necessary management competence, commitment, technical capability and financial resources to carry out trade development. Fourteen networks, ranging

"By attending the training session, I gained an in-depth understanding of the study, the methodology, and how to apply the results in our economic development activities," says Ruth Blades, Researcher for Greater Halifax Partnership. "We have used the report extensively, and have found it to be a valuable tool in promoting Greater Halifax as a destination for foreign investment. ACOA's initiatives with regard to the Atlantic KPMG brochure and training session were greatly appreciated."

¹⁶ The study can be found on the Web at www.competitivealternatives.com



from value-added lumber to rope cultured blue mussels to information technology, received support from ACOA.

One such network is the Atlantic Canada International Group Inc. This network comprises the following firms: Baird Planning Associates; Design Management Group; Enterprise Advancement and Education Services; Lewis Engineering; and Aliant Telecom. The network is an export-oriented entity having a geographical focus on Central America, specifically Honduras, as a market for the combined services. Members of the network have invested time and money with market intelligence trips to Honduras and Washington, D.C., and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is exploring potential international business opportunities. The network was awarded a \$400,000 contract from CIDA to undertake a study into the feasibility of a facility to convert waste materials from woodlots and farms into electric power.

Going Global Seminar - Sydney, Cape Breton

The Sydney and Area Chamber of Commerce is a not-for-profit organization concerned with the economic, social and educational welfare of its citizens. The Board has approximately 425 members and is governed by a council and an executive committee.

To partnership with ACOA, the Chamber sponsored a three-day seminar called "Going Global." The seminar focussed on trade awareness and skills development, international marketing and trade financing as well as trade logistics. "Going Global" was designed to provide businesses and individuals with the necessary skills to compete successfully in the international marketplace.

A total of six sessions were held and benefited 50 participants.

Focus on Marketing -

Valley Machine Works Ltd., New Brunswick

Valley Machine Works, located in Nackawic, New Brunswick, is a medium-sized manufacturing firm that specializes in complex machinery for sawmills and other wood processing facilities. Through support under ACOA's

Business Development Program and Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, Valley Machine Works has upgraded its marketing efforts with a focus on export markets.

The company has added a marketing manager to implement the marketing plan and developed promotional and marketing tools for trade shows and business development activities, targeting the U.S. eastern seaboard. Valley Machine Works has also formed a partnership with USNR, a U.S.-based manufacturer of machinery and control systems for the wood processing industry. This alliance allows Valley Machine Works to service equipment on behalf of USNR.

"In today's global marketplace, having the proper skills to sell internationally is not only an asset, it is a must."

John Nash, President of the Sydney and Area Chamber of Commerce

Identifying New Export Market Opportunities - Trade Team PEI

Trade Team PEI is a partnership of federal and provincial departments in Prince Edward Island responsible for export

trade development. ACOA leads the initiative on the federal side. As part of the team effort to identify new export market opportunities, Trade Team PEI, in co-operation with the Canadian Consulate in Atlanta, organized a trade seminar in October 2000 on Export Opportunities in the southeastern United States.

In working with the Consulate, the sectors of agri-food and seafood, building products, consumer/giftware products, and information technology were identified as having the greatest potential for Prince Edward Island companies. The seminar involved trade officers from the Consulate and buyers from the Atlanta area who were available for one-on-one appointments with Prince Edward Island companies.

Over 70 business and government representatives attended the event. Participants rated the event as being excellent, well organized and cost effective. A subsequent Atlantic Canada trade mission to Atlanta was held in May 2001, reinforcing the Atlantic presence in this expanding export market.

Diversifying through Trade - Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association

ACOA is partnering with the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association (NSBA) to develop and implement a Five-Year Strategic Plan to revitalize the industry. The objective is to increase diversification in the industry from the construction of commercial fishing vessels to custom pleasure craft for

export markets. The plan involves a variety of initiatives including education skills training, marketing and promotion, quality assured production, communication and co-operation, R&D/engineering and market research.

The Association now represents two-thirds of the industry, with 56 member companies – 26 boatbuilders and

30 support companies and 1,500 skilled trades people now working in boat shops and supporting industries. Annual sales exceed \$75 million, including \$20 million in export sales to the U.S. More than 50 individual projects have been implemented by the NSBA, including educational workshops, attendance at

international trade shows, development of promotional videos, development of occupational standards and handbooks, and a professional promotional campaign focussed on the U.S. marketplace.

"If we pay attention to quality, standards and the industry's business support requirements, Nova Scotia boatbuilders can service that market for years to come."

Tim Edwards, Executive Director,
Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association



ACCESS TO CAPITAL AND INFORMATION

OVERVIEW

Access to capital

Due to the size of the Atlantic economy, its relative isolation from major markets and its greater reliance on seasonally available resources, the business sector in Atlantic Canada has long faced a challenge in accessing capital. Breaking down these barriers, in association with public and private sector partners, is one of ACOA's strategic priorities.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, "the SME debt market appears to be less developed in Atlantic Canada than in Canada as a whole. Indeed, there may be fewer suppliers, less breadth, fewer providers and few choices. This is an important finding, which may suggest an additional role for government agencies whose mandate is to fill this regional financial gap."¹⁷

The challenges associated with access to capital are even more acute in rural areas.

The Agency's Business Development Program (BDP) enables SME investment projects to proceed because unsecured loans made available for eligible projects act much like equity, making the projects "bankable" and leveraging funding from other sources (e.g. lenders, financiers and venture capitalists)¹⁸.

The challenges associated with access to capital are even more acute in rural areas. Given that 46% of Atlantic Canadians live in rural areas, compared with 20% of all Canadians, the BDP has responded to their special needs. For instance, almost 65% of BDP assistance has been made outside metropolitan areas during a period when the top five chartered banks closed 16% of their branch network in the region, with 45% of these closures taking place in rural Atlantic Canada. Furthermore, research shows that the chartered banks' use of the Canada Small Business Financing (CSBF) in the Atlantic region has declined by 25% over the 1998-2002 period¹⁹. The BDP's Business Support element has also played an important

role by enabling the CBDCs to make business financing more accessible to rural communities²⁰.

With respect to higher-risk growth sectors, such as tourism and aquaculture (where growth in Atlantic Canada has outpaced the rest of Canada), the BDP responds by cultivating strong industry partnerships and providing "patient capital" to address the special financing needs associated with the debt servicing and collateral security constraints faced by SMEs in these sectors²¹.

The BDP has also addressed the access to capital gap for knowledge-based firms that also require patient capital to overcome the longer lead times for development as well as the need for financing soft costs where collateral security is lacking. The BDP has an important role in growing these firms to a size and capability that will attract the interest of the emerging venture capital market in Atlantic Canada²².

Access to information

The Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs) are the direct vehicle for providing access to information for SMEs. There is a CBSC office in each of the four Atlantic provinces and each office is a full-service business information resource accessible free-of-charge. Their knowledgeable, bilingual staff will answer business questions and provide options to help make informed decisions. A recent evaluation concluded that satisfaction rates for the CBSCs are very high, as 85% of CBSC clients were either satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided²³. In addition, as part of Government On-Line (GOL), the Government of Canada's plan to deliver information, programs and services over the Internet, ACOA is committed to using information and communications technologies to provide on-line access to its information and services. More information on ACOA programs and services can be found on the ACOA Web site at: <http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/e/financial/index.shtml>.

In addition, ACOA implemented the Aboriginal Business Service Network (ABSN). The Agency and 42 Aboriginal communities and organizations participate with the CBSCs in the development and implementation of this initiative. The ABSN Working Committee comprises ACOA, the four Atlantic CBSC Managers, and Aboriginal representatives

¹⁷ *SME Business Debt Financing in Atlantic Canada*, 1999.

¹⁸ Evaluation of ACOA's Business Development Program, ACOA, February 2003.

¹⁹ *The Changing Banking Environment in Atlantic Canada and Effects on the Atlantic Market and the Economy in General*, CFO Sustainability Group, August 2002

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ *Ibid*

²² *Ibid*

²³ Evaluation of the Atlantic Canada Business Service Centres, Goss Gilroy Inc., October 2002.



from all four Atlantic provinces. Currently, 41 communities/organizations (16 in New Brunswick, 15 in Nova Scotia, 3 in Prince Edward Island, and 7 in Newfoundland and Labrador) have received the computer hardware, software and training to improve their capacity to access CBCS/ABSN databases. One additional community in Newfoundland and Labrador (Hopedale or Davis Inlet) will join the network when efforts to select a host and resolve connectivity issues are successful. ACOA and the CBCSs are continuing their collaboration with the Atlantic ABSN Working Committee and concentrating efforts on the development of Aboriginal-specific information products, completion of their regional presence on the Web, and providing additional training in order to more fully address the Aboriginal business information needs.

ENHANCING ACCESS TO CAPITAL FOR ATLANTIC SMEs

According to a 1999 analysis by the Conference Board of Canada, the BDP represents about 5% of total business financing in the region²⁴. In the business sectors eligible for the BDP, primarily manufacturing, tourism and business

services, it is estimated that the BDP provided about 15% of total business financing in the region.

In addition to the BDP, ACOA has been involved in partnerships specifically designed to enhance access to capital for Atlantic SMEs.

Venture Capital - ACF Equity Atlantic Inc

"ACOA's participation in the formation and funding of ACF was critical to the Fund attaining necessary critical mass (\$30 million) to be viable. Without its support, the Fund simply would not have happened."

Peter Forton, CEO, ACF Equity Atlantic Inc.

ACF Equity Atlantic Inc. (ACF) is a venture capital partnership between three groups: ACOA; the four Atlantic provincial governments; and private sector lenders, namely, the Bank of Montreal, Bank of Nova Scotia, Toronto-Dominion Bank, Royal Bank, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, National Bank of Canada, Hong Kong Bank of Canada and la Fédération des

Caisses Populaires Acadiennes Ltée. Each group participated in the capitalization of the fund with a \$10-million contribution. The \$30-million fund operates at arm's length from government and investment decisions are based on business case analysis by independent staff at ACF.

ACE, with its focus on innovative, high-knowledge companies, has been a significant factor in the five years since its inception in 1997, helping put the Atlantic region on the Canadian map in terms of venture capital activity.

²⁴ Sources of SME Business Debt Financing in Atlantic Canada by Theresa Shutt and Pierre Vanasse, The Conference Board of Canada, March 1999.



This activity over the five-year period from 1998 to 2002 saw \$270 million of venture capital activities in Atlantic Canada, more than three times the investments over the preceding five-year period. As a known and respected investor in the Canadian venture capital marketplace, ACF has leveraged its capital more than five times, investing in venture capital transactions of over \$100 million to date.

Business Financing in Rural Areas – the Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporations

In order to improve access to capital in rural areas and as part of ACOA's commitment to long-term, community-based economic development, the Agency has supported the creation of the Atlantic Canada Community Business Investment Fund to provide an ongoing source of investment capital for small and medium-sized enterprises in rural areas. The partnership is between ACOA and the Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs), which represents the region's network of 41 CBDCs located mainly in rural communities throughout Atlantic Canada. Funding of \$14.1 million over four years has been provided to meet loan requirements of SMEs in rural areas.

The CBDCs are autonomous, not-for-profit corporations, serving all of rural Atlantic Canada supported by ACOA. They assist in the creation of small businesses and in the expansion, modernization and stabilization of existing businesses. They offer both technical and financial services for entrepreneurs in their respective regions.

Technical assistance usually takes the form of information, counselling and advice on small business-related matters. Financial assistance is usually in the form of a loan, but may include equity or loan guarantees.

"This is a new strategic direction for the CBDCs. We can now meet the demand for loans as required, rather than waiting for new appropriations on a fiscal-year basis."

Basil Ryan, Chief Executive Officer of Atlantic Canada Community Business Investment Fund

These financial services are targeted to entrepreneurs who have difficulty securing capital through traditional sources of funding. They do not compete with financial institutions. All loans are repayable and the maximum amount that can be invested in a business is \$125,000. Investment decisions are made by an independent local board of directors sensitive to the needs of the community.

A recent evaluation study²⁵ concluded that the CBDCs are having a strong impact in their communities. The loans and support provided by the CBDCs support the creation and maintenance of jobs by increasing incomes and helping to diversify the local economy. The partnership is working well and effectively serves the small

business development needs of the clients and the community. The CBDCs have a number of strengths, including community involvement, that would be difficult to replicate through any other delivery structure, such as direct delivery by a government organization, without major new investments. The CBDC alliances/networks with banks, credit unions, other regional economic development agencies, municipalities, educational institutions and others, strengthen the outreach of the CBDCs, create a referral network and help harmonize planning at the local level.

ASSISTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ATLANTIC SMEs

ACOA's evaluation data of the Community Futures Program showed CBDCs have a strong impact on rural communities:

- client satisfaction is 94%***
- average of 1.9 jobs were created and 3.3 maintained based on an average loan of \$38,000***

The BDP provides access to capital to enable investments by SMEs in the region. The program was designed to increase the number of successful start-ups, expansions and modernizations. According to the recent evaluation of the program²⁶, firms assisted through the BDP have experienced growth in employment four-times greater than that of

²⁵ Evaluation of the Community Futures Program (delivered through the Atlantic CBDCs), Goss Gilroy Inc., May 2003.

²⁶ Evaluation of ACOA's Business Development Program, February 2003.

unassisted firms. The growth in payrolls was more than six times that of unassisted firms. After three years, the survival rate of BDP-assisted firms is more than double that of unassisted firms. Following are specific examples of ACOA's involvement in increasing access to capital enabling investments by Atlantic SMEs.

"With improvements made in technology on a daily basis, the Centre needs to be able to change with the time. This expansion project gives us the opportunity to improve our equipment, train more students, provide better service to the industry and ultimately strengthen our Centres capabilities."

Mr. Brian McMahon, CAD Systems Analyst,
University College of Cape Breton's CAD/CAM Centre

Labrador West Quartzite Limited

Labrador West Quartzite Limited was established to operate a quarry and processing facility to produce high quality quartzite for sale to the silicon metal industry. This facility is expected to produce 75,000 tons of material per year, with the capacity to produce 350,000 tons per year.

Implementation of this project has resulted in the establishment of 10 new jobs in the Labrador West area. In addition, the project will generate export sales of \$10 million over the next three-year period and will develop the quartzite industry in the area.

The total cost of the project was estimated to be \$2,690,000. The company contributed \$580,000 together with funding of a repayable contribution of \$490,000 from the Agency and \$1,620,000 from a commercial financial institution. The company is located in an isolated community, where the participation of the Agency was needed to lever the participation of traditional funding institutions.

**University College of Cape Breton -
Expansion of the CAD/CAM²⁷ Centre**

Keeping up with the constant changes in technology has become a way of life for the staff at the University College

of Cape Breton's (UCCB) CAD/CAM Centre. Established in 1987, the Centre provides support for eastern Nova Scotia enterprises in areas such as CAD programming and operation training, robotics and CAD communications.

The recent expansion of the Centre has increased the UCCB's capacity to stay in tune with industry needs. The upgrades to and expansion of the Centre will provide a timely response to industry requests for greater services such as laser alignment of machines, rapid prototype development of products and access to a high-speed vertical milling machine. This will enable the Centre to increase the number of students trained and develop additional projects in collaboration with industry requirements.

Located near Sydney, UCCB offers a unique combination of degree, diploma and certificate programs. Since becoming the first university college in Canada, UCCB has become a hub for R&D. The CAD/CAM Centre is part of a group of centres at the university that seek to facilitate the transfer of innovation and knowledge to the community for the purpose of economic diversification and commercialization.



Nova Agri Associates Limited, Nova Scotia

Nova Agri Associates Limited, incorporated in 1985, is owned 100% by Dykeview Farms Limited. The company has approximately 2,000 acres of crops in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley, with processing facilities in Canning and Centreville.

²⁷ CAD - Computer-Assisted Design; CAM - Computer-Assisted Manufacturing



The core business is storing, grading, packing, processing and marketing fruit and vegetables. The company's principal products are potatoes, onions and high bush blueberries. High bush blueberries are sold fresh and for further processing, 90% of which are sold to export markets in the United States, the United Kingdom and Iceland.

The company, working with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program, developed methodologies and technologies needed to extend the shelf life of cultivated blueberries by as much as 10 weeks. These new storage techniques involved the design of atmospheric conditions appropriate for the berries and the development of the type of containers needed to hold and ship the products. In 2002, the design group was awarded a Technology Partners in Technology Transfer Award.

This is a capital-intensive business, which requires that the business keep pace with new technologies. The company was able to construct this new storage facility with the help of a \$475,000 loan from ACOA.

Groupe Savoie Inc., New Brunswick

With basic hardwood milling equipment and 25 employees, Jean-Claude Savoie started his small sawmill operations in St. Quentin in 1980.

Twenty-three years later, the company – now 450 employees strong – boasts two hardwood sawmill facilities, a pallet plant and a dimension plant, that produces value-added wood components for furniture, kitchen cabinets, giftware and flooring manufacturers. Currently exporting more than 50% of its products to Europe and the United States, Groupe Savoie Inc. has turned its attention toward developing opportunities in Asia and deeper market penetration into European countries such as Germany, Belgium and Norway.

In recent years, ACOA assistance has helped the company to add necessary storage, expand its hardwood mill operations and modernize equipment. Most recently, the Agency provided funding to help Groupe Savoie engage the testing services of the University of New Brunswick's Wood Science and Technology Centre to determine the capability of new equipment on the market to improve efficiencies in pallet production.



*"We were just a sawmill before,
and then we looked at adding value
to what we do. It's everything to our
business today. ACOA has helped us
get where we are today."*

Jean-Claude Savoie
CEO, Groupe Savoie Inc, NB



ATLANTIC ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ACOA'S IMPACT

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased at an average annual rate of 3.8% over the 1998 to 2002 period, just ahead of the national pace of 3.7%. In total, GDP increased by \$9.2 billion over the period, growing from \$45.6 billion in 1997 to \$54.8 billion in 2002.

The Atlantic economy grew by an average rate of 3.8% per year over the 1998-2002 period, just ahead of the national pace of 3.7%.

The mineral fuel industry led the way, accounting for 18% of the gain, followed by commercial services (13% of total growth) and manufacturing (8%).

Figure 16

Percentage Change in Key Economic Indicators - 2002 vs 1997



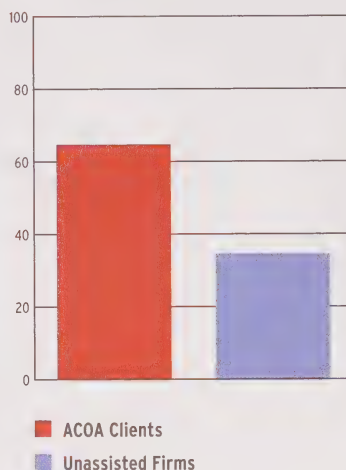
Source: Statistics Canada

Economic activity over this period was substantially influenced by several major investment projects related to highways, new manufacturing capacity, and the development of offshore oil and gas production. These large projects generated spin-off effects throughout the Atlantic economy, especially in the construction and business services sectors.

Economic growth in the region was also supported by strong output increases in the fishing, transportation, communication and tourism sectors.

Evidence of the contribution of Agency programming to regional income growth comes from Statistics Canada data on the growth of payrolls in ACOA-assisted versus that of unassisted firms. The increase in payroll (a close measure of earned income) in ACOA-assisted firms, was nearly twice that of unassisted firms from 1989-2000.

Figure 17

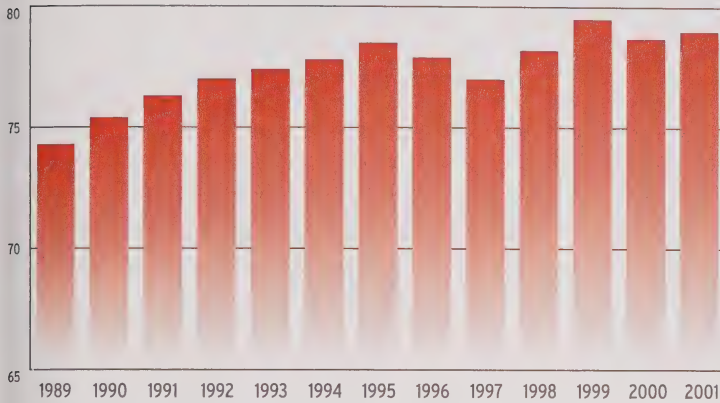
Increase in Payrolls 1989-2000
All Industries*
(Percent Change)

Source: Statistics Canada Employment Dynamics
* Excludes government service industries

Earned income per capita in the region increased from 78.2% of the national average in 1998 to 79.0% in 2001. Earned income per capita is now almost five percentage points higher than the 1989 level of 74.3%.

Figure 18

**Earned Income
Atlantic Canada 1989-2001**
(per capita as a percent of Canada)



Source: Statistics Canada

There were 112,000 more people employed in the region in 2002 than in 1997, with over 95% of these individuals occupying full-time positions. The region's participation rate increased from 58.5% in 1997 to 62.4% in 2002, a record high.

Rising confidence within the Atlantic economy pushed the labour force participation rate to record levels over the period – from 58.5% in 1997 to 62.4% in 2002. Even with sharply higher participation rates, over two percentage points were shaved off the unemployment rate, which declined from 13.9% in 1997 to 11.6% in 2002.

Similarly, the region's employment rate increased from 50.4% in 1997 to 55.1% in 2002. This gain of 4.7 percentage points was considerably higher than the national gain of 2.8, thereby reducing the gap between the region and Canada as a whole.

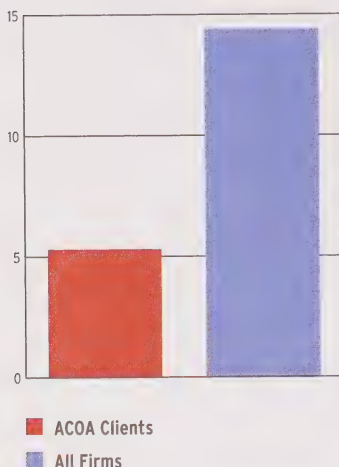
The number of unemployed in Atlantic Canada fell from 152,000 in 1997 to 139,000 in 2002, a decline of 13,000. The unemployment rate dropped from 13.9% in 1997 to 11.6% in 2002, one of its lowest levels since the early 1980s. Over the same period, the unemployment rate for Canada declined from 9.1% in 1997 to 7.7% in 2002. The Atlantic region's economy is becoming much more diversified. In each of the provinces within Atlantic Canada, new export-oriented industries have emerged, generating additional employment and new wealth within the region.

The Atlantic region's economy is becoming much more diversified. In each of the provinces within Atlantic Canada, new export-oriented industries have emerged, generating additional employment and new wealth within the region.

The manufacturing sector has been a strong performer over the past five years. Real manufacturing GDP has increased from \$4.98 billion in 1997 to \$5.95 billion in 2002, while employment has increased by nearly 15,000. Just over one-third of these jobs are attributable to firms receiving ACOA support (see Figure 19). Several industries within the manufacturing sector have contributed to the improved performance.

Figure 19

Manufacturing Employment Growth 2002 versus 1997 (thousands)



Source: ACOA's Benefits Monitoring Module of CRIMS and Statistics Canada. Gains by ACOA clients are actual incremental job gains.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the oil industry has become a catalyst for growth within the professional, scientific and engineering industries, as well as the boat-building and metal fabrication industries. The fact that 80% of topsides construction associated with the province's third offshore oil development (White Rose) is being carried out in Newfoundland and Labrador is testimony to the increasing engineering and industrial fabrication capabilities within the regional economy.

The aerospace industry has grown to become a major contributor to the Prince Edward Island economy. Atlantic exports of aerospace products and parts totalled \$118 million in 2002, more than double the value reported in 1997.

In the region's wood products industries, growth rates have been even more impressive. For example, the veneer, plywood and engineered wood products manufacturing industry has experienced nearly 140% growth in exports – from \$103 million in 1997 to \$244 million in 2002.

Other top performing industries within the region's manufacturing sector include the navigational, measurement, medical and control instruments (exports up by 220% to \$80 million over past five years) and the ornamental and architectural metal products industry (exports up by 380% to \$87.1 million).

Another area is the food products industry. Frozen food exports increased 48% to \$435 million over the period, led by increased processed potatoes from Prince Edward Island.

The fabricated structural products manufacturing industry also experienced substantial growth over the period, posting a 200% increase in exports between 1997 and 2002. The manufacturing sector benefited from the addition of new capacity in the paper and rubber industries in Nova Scotia over this period.

Another strong performer in the Atlantic economy over the past five years has been the tourism industry. On the strength of a 35% increase in the number of visitors over the period, total non-resident expenditures grew 37% from \$2.30 billion in 1997 to \$3.16 billion in 2002. Within the accommodations component of this industry, employment has increased by 2,500 over the 1997 to 2002 period.

The region's aquaculture industry has expanded considerably over this period. Exports totalled \$187 million in 2002, up 46% from 1997. Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, in particular, have experienced strong growth in mussel and salmon aquaculture production. In Newfoundland and Labrador, where there has been considerable effort expended on R&D and extension services over the past five years, the industry is poised to contribute significantly to future growth of the overall Atlantic aquaculture industry.

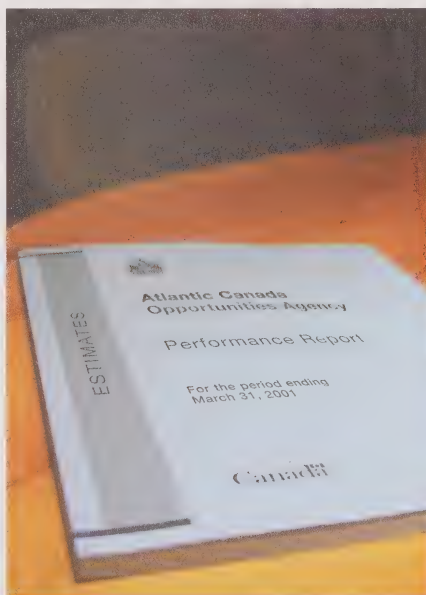
Overall, the Atlantic economy has performed quite well during the past five years. Considering that Canada itself has performed better than most industrial countries, this period has been a very good one for the region. There is diversification occurring in each of the Atlantic provinces, while new opportunities continue to develop in the natural resource industries and more firms are moving into export markets to expand their businesses.

ACOA's IMPACT

ACOA's direct support to business under the Business Development Program, COOPERATION agreements, Community Futures Program (CF) and Seed Capital ConneXion Program for Young Entrepreneurs results in the direct creation of jobs that can be expressed as a total impact on the Atlantic economy. To do this, the jobs are translated into a measure of value-added economic impact sector by sector. Value-added impact by sector is entered in the Conference Board of Canada model to estimate the impact on regional earned income as measured by GDP. In this manner, other macro-economic effects, in particular the impact on taxes and total employment, can also be estimated.

It is important to note several features of these estimates:

1. Only jobs actually created are used to calculate benefits. Actual jobs created at the company level are tracked through the Agency's Benefits Monitoring module of the Client Relationship Information Management System (CRIMS) and by independent surveys of clients. For the BDP, the estimates incorporate the fact that clients have achieved about 65% of expected gains²⁸. This estimate is conservative as many projects have not reached completion and can be expected to record further gains as they achieve full implementation of their business plans.
2. Jobs maintained, although they do produce real economic benefits, are not included because of difficulties in providing a reliable measure of economic impact.
3. The job and economic impacts are those that result only from successful projects. However, the ACOA expenditures include investment in all projects, including failed ones.
4. Only the benefits of incremental projects as calculated on the basis of Statistics Canada data on the growth of ACOA-supported firms versus all firms and independent client survey results, are included. For example, for jobs created through BDP assistance, an estimate of 0.84 is used as an incrementality factor, meaning that only 84 of 100 jobs created in a firm are included in ACOA's final count.
5. Benefits include direct employment gains by ACOA-assisted businesses, plus indirect and induced employment as estimated by the Conference Board's model. The indirect impact is generated by ACOA's assisted businesses purchasing goods and services from their suppliers. Induced impacts occur as incomes associated with direct and indirect employment gains are spent and re-spent throughout the economy. This direct and indirect impact, commonly known as the "multiplier," is calculated to be approximately one, meaning that one job is created through these indirect and induced effects for every job created directly by ACOA expenditures.
6. "Double-counting" of employment gains, between ACOA programs and between ACOA and other federal departments and provincial governments, has been accounted for. Surveys have revealed that in 15% of cases, CF projects also receive BDP funding²⁹, therefore, the CF employment gains have been reduced by 15%. On projects where ACOA funding is combined with other public funds, the share of total jobs created credited to ACOA is equal to ACOA's share of public monies invested in the project.



²⁸ Evaluation of ACOA's Business Development Program, ACOA, February 2003.

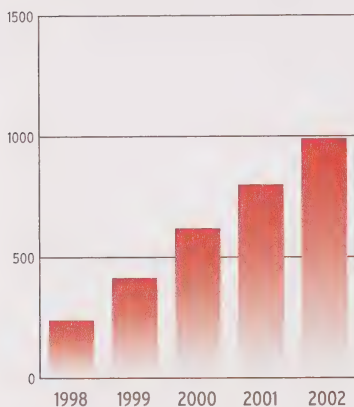
²⁹ Survey of CBDC clients, ACOA, 1997.

Impact on Gross Domestic Product

The impact on GDP is shown in **Figure 20**. It is estimated that in constant 1997 dollars, GDP was almost \$1 billion higher annually by 2002 than it would have been in the absence of ACOA's expenditures in direct support of business. Over the five-year period, direct Agency support to business has produced total accumulated annual increases of well over \$5 in GDP gains for every dollar of ACOA expenditure.

Figure 20

Impact of ACOA Direct Support to Business on Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
Total Increase in GDP
(\$ millions stated in 1997 dollars)



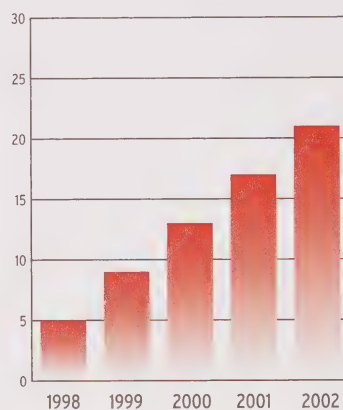
Source: ACOA - See Section 4 for additional details

Impact on Employment

Total employment in the Atlantic region (**Figure 21**) is over 20,000 higher in 2002 than it would have been without the total net employment gains (direct plus indirect and induced) resulting from the Agency's direct support to small business.

Figure 21

Impact on Employment
ACOA Direct Support to Business
(Thousands of jobs created)



Source: ACOA - See section 4 for methodology

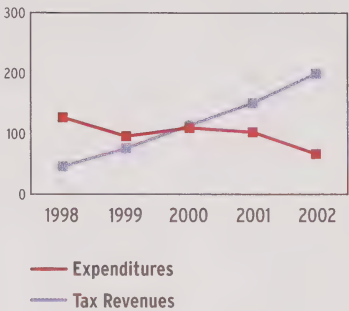
Returns to the Taxpayer

Figure 22 includes personal income taxes on wages earned by employees and sales taxes on purchases made by companies and their employees. Note that these tax revenues do not include corporate income taxes which, for technical reasons, cannot be calculated by the Conference Board model. In the interest of producing conservative estimates, possible savings to the government in employment insurance payments due to the additional employment created by assisted firms have not been included.

Over the five years from 1998 to 2002, expenditures of about \$500 million have produced tax revenues of over \$600 million.

Net impact calculations do not assume any repayment of ACOA contributions to businesses, which, if included, would lead to significantly greater impacts.

Figure 22
**Tax Revenues Resulting from
ACOA Expenditures***
(\$ millions)



Source: ACOA's Corporate System and CBDC Database

* Expenditures are the sum of spending under the BDP and COOPERATION programs (in direct support of firms to create jobs), the Community Futures Program and the Seed Capital Connexion Program for Young Entrepreneurs.

ACOA did not achieve a position of leadership in Atlantic Canada's economic development by standing still. The Agency has reached this point by being flexible and adaptable, by recognizing the changing environment in which it operates, by constantly challenging its staff to do better, and by never resting on its laurels.

One thing that has not changed is ACOA's mandate, which is to increase economic opportunity in Atlantic Canada. This is specified in the *ACOA Act* and remains the foundation of ACOA's work. Pursuit of this mandate necessitates a clear set of strategic priorities, which are periodically revisited and renewed, and which direct the Agency's day-to-day operations. This report is centred on these priorities. New programs are constructed around them, and Agency staff must never lose sight of them.

*One thing that has not changed is
ACOA's mandate, which is to increase
economic opportunity in
Atlantic Canada.*

Although this report looks back and gives an account of ACOA's performance over the past five years, it also offers an opportunity to look forward. This is more than just looking into a crystal ball. It is firmly founded on what has happened in the recent past, the programs and initiatives that ACOA already delivers, the current federal priorities, and a host of trends that are already in motion and over which ACOA exercises some control. We cannot turn back time or change the fact that Atlantic Canada's people are, on average, getting older, but we can do more to attract new people to settle in the region, bringing their families and their skills with them. We can encourage innovative practices in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), nudging entrepreneurs and managers in new directions. We can, in a similar vein, support communities as they explore ways to promote their economies and help retain their young people by providing them with job options.

Any look forward can usefully employ the same headings as the strategic priority section of this report.

Policy, advocacy, and co-ordination will continue to evolve at the core of everything that ACOA does. Policy work must remain focussed, even within shifting priorities. Priorities have to be set and reviewed frequently, and implementation of policy decisions will be a joint effort throughout ACOA and with its partners. Advocacy will con-

tinue its emphasis on defending Atlantic Canada's interests in national debates and maximizing regional industrial benefits from major federal procurement contracts.

Co-ordination is multi-layered, and encompasses the concepts of both horizontality and ACOA's role as a regional hub. The objective of co-ordination is to promote a pan-Atlantic approach to issues where a commonality of interest can be identified. This necessarily involves working with partners, including provincial governments, other federal departments, municipalities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. These partners must be constantly engaged, requiring a sharp focus on issues and addressing them in a co-ordinated fashion. New issues are constantly emerging, but one that will occupy ACOA's efforts for some time to come is how Atlantic Canada can attract and retain more immigrants. Another is how to maintain constructive relations with provincial governments now that economic development agreements have been replaced by new development delivery mechanisms.

ACOA will continue to support federal objectives. Delivery of federal programs has become a central part of ACOA's business, and this role will probably expand. Horizontal initiatives, such as the rural agenda and climate change, will continue to demand a regional component, and ACOA will contribute that component for Atlantic Canada. A variety of agreements with other federal departments in the region will co-ordinate economic development efforts.

Entrepreneurship and business skills development will remain key to ACOA's efforts at economic development. A central tenet in ACOA's establishment in 1987 was to tap into the entrepreneurial pool that exists in the region, and provide individuals with the necessary tools to begin to realize their dreams. Developing these skills is critical to economic growth, and ACOA needs to develop and sustain its partnerships with universities and colleges to foster this growth. Managing innovation in enterprises needs special attention, as does Aboriginal development. Two components of the Entrepreneurial and Business Skills Development Partnership of the AIP will emphasize management skills development for women and young people.

Innovation is firmly planted at the forefront of the economic development agenda, not only in Atlantic Canada but also in Canada as a whole. AIF, in its two rounds of proposals, was greatly oversubscribed, demonstrating a keen desire among the region's universities, research institutes and businesses to undertake groundbreaking

research. However, it is already time to think of a successor to AIF that must continue to emphasize building Atlantic Canada's R&D and innovation system and capacity, enhancing its population of qualified personnel, and improving their ability to take new products and processes to markets.

Community economic development represents a particularly interesting mix of challenges. ACOA programming has traditionally leaned more toward rural communities and small towns that are home to so many of Atlantic Canada's people and where development needs were more urgent. Cities have recently come to the forefront of policy debate in Canada as they exercise an influence on economic growth out of proportion to their share of population and are usually the centres of growth of the new economy. They also serve as centres of learning, health care, R&D, culture and entertainment and provide many of the business and personal services that Atlantic Canadians have come to take for granted. ACOA must recognize the importance of cities in economic development while not neglecting its rural and small town clients.

Increasingly, economic development overlaps with social development in communities. ACOA's mandate is economic development, but often this cannot work well without engagement in issues that have a social aspect. In its 2003 Budget, the Government of Canada signalled a re-emphasis on social programs and ACOA will support this where economic applicability can be demonstrated. This will take on an extra emphasis as we try to attract more immigrants to Atlantic Canadian communities to counter the aging population.

Tourism in Atlantic Canada will continue to offer opportunities for economic growth. This growth will be based on the region's natural environment, cultural diversity, human history and well-developed visitor infrastructure, including for business travel and conventions. Like trade and investment, further growth in tourism will rely significantly on the United States, but the government private sector Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership will continue to push marketing and promotion in diverse international markets. Benefits of increased tourism will be felt in many sectors, including accommodation, transportation, retail, food service, arts and culture, and recreation.

Trade and investment have become key parts of ACOA's work. Their promotion will continue to be critical to economic development in general. The efforts in all cases, whether to boost export trade or to encourage new

investment from outside, will hinge on the region's relationships with the United States, but will also involve broadening horizons to take in other parts of the world. This will be accomplished via Team Canada Atlantic missions to various markets, by participation in Team Canada missions, and by boosting Atlantic SMEs' skills in export marketing.

Access to capital was one of the roles that ACOA was explicitly set up to address in 1987, and it remains critical to the Agency's work. Offering repayable loans to businesses via the BDP will be supplemented by providing access to capital in different ways, such as venture capital funds and locally-based lending delivered by CBDCs. As commercial financial services continue to be withdrawn from many smaller and more remote communities, someone has to fill this gap; ACOA is well placed to help. Access to capital must always have regard for the widely different kinds of businesses it seeks to accommodate, from new technology start-ups to established companies in traditional sectors, all of which have different needs and demands.

These are the pillars of ACOA's structure that underpin its work. This work is to promote economic development in Atlantic Canada. It stresses entrepreneurial development and business skills, offering Atlantic Canadians the chance to expand a range of opportunities for business and employment. It encourages innovation, in new products and processes, and in their adoption by new and established businesses. In this way, the productivity of individual workers increases, making Atlantic companies more efficient and more competitive in global markets. There is the opportunity to increase export sales and to move into new markets.

None of this happens without direction and good management, and different kinds of support. Much of this comes from individual entrepreneurs and the management teams they put together. At the operational level, ACOA employees help in building these teams, offering capital and advice, and in opening doors that are otherwise closed. At the strategic level, ACOA Advisory Board members, who are successful entrepreneurs and business professionals in their own right, provide direction and support through expert advice to the President and Minister responsible for ACOA on a broad spectrum of Agency policy matters and strategic directions. Together, these two groups of dedicated individuals have helped thousands of Atlantic Canadians over the past five years to realize their dreams of owning and operating successful businesses and improving not only their own lives, but also the communities in which they live, both for today and the future.

TECHNICAL APPENDIX ON METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH



SECTION 4 - TECHNICAL APPENDIX ON METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH



INTRODUCTION

The following pages contain two sections describing the methodology and approach used in estimating the economic impact of ACOA programming on the Atlantic region's economy, as reported in this Five-Year Report to Parliament. The approach used is a refinement of the methodology used by the Agency in its 1993-1998 Five-Year Report to Parliament.

PART I METHODOLOGY FOR ESTIMATING ECONOMIC IMPACT

A logic model of the methodology presents in graphic form the **Process** followed in the calculation of the economic impact and identifies the source of data used and instruments of analysis. The model also identifies the **Output**, identifying measures used at each step of the process.

Part I - Methodology for Estimating Economic Impact

Process 	Output 
Agency database and Statistics Canada data on investment patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project level expenditures, ACOA only and total by province and industrial sector • Expenditures broken down by construction investment, machinery and equipment and operating³⁰
Statistics Canada tracking data on ACOA clients and program evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incremental direct actual jobs created • Incremental impact of projects on investment expenditures, sales, wages and salaries, exports and new SMEs³¹
Statistics Canada data on relationships between jobs, sales, wages and salaries and value-added by industrial sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incremental direct value-added by industrial sector, by province
Statistics Canada data on business entry and exit; Agency data on project failure rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incremental value-added by sector, by province adjusted for project failure rate
Conference Board of Canada's Atlantic Provinces Econometric Model – Investment and sector value-added adjusted upward by incremental investment and value-added by sector adjusted for failure rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total impact including indirect and induced effects on GDP, employment and tax revenues

³⁰ It is important that expenditures be segregated into construction investment, machinery and equipment purchases and operating expenditures because the impact on the Atlantic economy differs by category. In the case of machinery and equipment spending, most of the equipment would be produced outside Atlantic Canada, resulting in minimal indirect and induced benefits. Construction investment and operating expenditures would have relatively greater impact, as local labour and materials are employed to a greater extent.

³¹ The Auditor General, in his report of November 1995, Chapter 18, defines an incremental project as one that would likely not have proceeded with the same scope, at the same time, and in the same location, without government assistance.

Notes concerning the precision of the estimates

a) The Conference Board Model

The Conference Board Model is an econometric model of the economies of the Canadian provinces. Each provincial model consists of about 20 industry groups. The major advantage of the Conference Board Model is that each province is modeled explicitly. Other available econometric models determine effects using a national model, and then calculate provincial activity by dividing the national activity into fixed shares for each province using historical information. This "allocation" approach is likely to attenuate the effects of programs such as those administered by ACOA, which alter the share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) accounted for by the Atlantic provinces in any particular industry. The estimates of the effects on the Atlantic region are likely to be more accurate using the Conference Board Model.

The Conference Board Model was selected because of the importance of accurate regional impact modelling. However, the fact that it is not highly disaggregated by industrial sector, 20 industry groups as opposed to over 100 groups for some competing models, poses limitations on precision. For example, there is no breakdown below the manufacturing sector, which means that the average value-added per employee for all manufacturing is used. This average produces a reasonable, if not conservative, estimate, because available data from Statistics Canada indicate that value-added per employee for ACOA clients exceeds the average for all Atlantic manufacturing businesses³².

b) Incrementality

When investment is made in a business, there is always the possibility that the project would have been carried out with or without the government's help. If the investment would have been carried out anyway, then the only effect of the government's involvement is to add to the wealth of the entrepreneur. ACOA has contributed to the measurement of incrementality by the use of post-facto survey questions such as: "Would this investment have taken place without aid from ACOA?" and "If this investment would have taken place anyway, would it have been delayed without government assistance?"

Some entrepreneurs will provide answers they think the questioner wants to hear in order to get them out the door, or in order not to prejudice their chances of receiving further assistance. Other business people are fiercely independent and reluctant to admit that government support has played any role in their success. It is reasonable to assume that these two phenomena will balance each other.

To add to the reliability of measurement of what would occur in the absence of ACOA support, it is most helpful to compare assisted firms with unassisted firms. This methodology has the added benefit of eliminating or reducing the impact of external factors faced by all firms (e.g. the stage of the business cycle). The observed difference in performance can be taken as a measure of the incrementality of government assistance³³.

For this Five-Year Report, in order to provide a robust evaluation of the impact of the BDP, which represents a large proportion of the direct job creation supported by the Agency, Statistics Canada has tracked the performance of ACOA clients versus unassisted firms. The incrementality factor of 0.84 used for the BDP represents that portion of the employment growth of BDP-assisted firms over the 1998-2003 period that is in excess of the growth of unassisted firms.

Supporting this estimate is the finding of the Auditor General in her December 2001 report on ACOA that, "there was evidence that most firms needed the BDP assistance to proceed"³⁴.

³² Statistics Canada Employment Dynamics.

³³ A very useful analysis of the issue involved in estimating incrementality is provided in the paper *Six Steps to Heaven: Evaluating the Impact of Public Support to Small Business in Developed Economies*, by David J. Storey, presented at Mikkell Conference on Growth and Job Creation in SMEs, January 7-9, 1998.

³⁴ Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons: Chapter 6, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency - Economic Development.



Estimated Versus Actual Created Jobs

Through its Benefits Monitoring Tracking Module of the Client Relationship Information Management System (CRIMS), the Agency regularly monitors the BDP actual employment at the client or company level. This data is compared with the benchmark level of employment at the time of receiving support and the level expected as a result of the loan from ACOA. Monitoring at the client level is distinct from the project level and provides an estimate of net employment gain (loss) company wide that is comparable with the net gain (loss) recorded by the economy in aggregate.

Data from the benefits monitoring module indicate that over the 1998-2001 period, clients achieved 65% of the expected employment creation. This factor was used to discount estimated jobs created from the BDP to arrive at actual jobs. This estimate is closely corroborated by analysis of Statistics Canada data on BDP client performance over the 1994-1998 period, which found that clients achieved on a company employment level basis 68% of their employment creation estimates³⁵.

For the Community Futures (CF) Program, actual job creation has been estimated at 59% of expectations by means of an independent survey of recipient firms³⁶.

For the BDP, successful clients are identified through Agency monitoring and only jobs associated with these clients are included in the count. For the CF program and the Seed Capital ConneXion Program for Young Entrepreneurs (SCCYE), which are administered by third-party partners, loan write-offs are used to estimate annual failure rates. Expected job creation counts are discounted by annual rates of 2-3% for these programs (i.e. by 10-15% for the five-year period).

PART II MAIN RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The second table identifies the key **Performance Indicators** used to measure results. These are the corporate indicators used across programs and Agency-wide to report on overall ACOA performance and achievements. All ACOA programs report on one or several of these key indicators, in addition to their program specific indicators.

The second column summarizes the main **Results and Achievements** included in the report.

A third column provides more details on **Approaches** used for each of the results reported. This section includes information on assumptions underpinning the economic impact estimates, definitions, factors or rates used in the calculations, limitations and other comments relevant to the measures used.

³⁵ Statistics Canada, Employment Dynamics.

³⁶ Goss Gilroy Inc., Evaluation of the CF Program (delivered through the Atlantic CBDCs), May 2003.

Part II - Main Results and Achievements

Performance Indicators	Results and Achievements	Approaches
Employment	Total employment was almost 20,000 higher in 2002 than it would have been without ACOA's direct support to business.	An estimate of actual jobs created is calculated from a project-by-project count of job impact for those projects in direct support of business. Estimated jobs are adjusted by a factor of 0.65 to arrive at actual net employment gains on a company basis. These factors are derived from the Agency's monitoring of client performance and corroborated by tracking of ACOA clients by Statistics Canada. For CF programming, the factor is based on an independent survey of clients. Actual jobs are adjusted for incrementality, 84% for the BDP and 53% for CF. The Conference Board model produces a multiplier of about one, meaning that each job created directly creates one other job through spin-off spending.
Impact on Atlantic GDP	Total Atlantic GDP was estimated to be \$0.9 billion higher in 2002 than it would have been without ACOA direct support to business. For each dollar invested directly in businesses through ACOA programming (BDP, CF, Seed Capital ConneXion Program for Young Entrepreneurs and COOPERATION programs) there were well over \$5 gains in Atlantic GDP.	Seasonal and part-time employment is converted to full-time (1,600 hours/year) and long-term (five-year duration) equivalents. Using job numbers from above, the value-added per employee, as determined by the model, is entered into the Conference Board econometric model to estimate overall impact on GDP, total employment and taxes. Jobs include only jobs created. Job calculation is deliberately conservative: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jobs maintained are excluded• Incrementality factor (84%)• OAG found that "there was evidence that most firms needed the BDP assistance to proceed"• Failure rate (excludes jobs for BDP projects which failed during the five years)• CF and Seed Capital ConneXion jobs are discounted by 2-3% annually to reflect estimated failures, based on loan write-offs• Double counting of jobs has been accounted for

Part II - Main Results and Achievements (Continued from previous page)

Performance Indicators	Results and Achievements	Approaches
Return to Taxpayers	From 1998 to 2002, ACOA direct support to business of \$350 million has produced tax revenues of over \$500 million.	<p>The methodology is a refinement of the methodology used in ACOA's Five-Year Report to Parliament for 1993-1998.</p> <p>In reviewing the underlying assumptions of this earlier methodology, PriceWaterhouseCoopers concluded in 1998 that "ACOA's process and assumptions are reasonable...we even suggest that some argumentation could be developed that would imply that the process and assumptions are conservative."</p> <p>Includes personal income taxes on wages earned by employees and sales taxes on purchases made by the companies and their employees.</p> <p>Impact does not include corporate taxes or estimates of savings to government on employment insurance or welfare payments.</p>
Increase in Wages and Salaries	From 1989 to 1999 ³⁷ , the payroll (a good measure of earned income) increased by 65% for ACOA clients, compared with 35% for all Atlantic firms.	Based on Statistics Canada Employment Dynamics data, which compare ACOA clients' performance with that of Canada and the Atlantic region. Statistics Canada independently gathers and compares data through a contract with ACOA.

³⁷ Data limitations: There is a time gap because data are based on corporate tax returns. The most recent data available are from 1999.

Part II - Main Results and Achievements (Continued from previous page)

Performance Indicators	Results and Achievements	Approaches
Business Survival Rates	<p>New businesses supported by ACOA generally have a better chance of survival.</p> <p>The five-year survival rate of ACOA-assisted firms is two and one-half times the survival rate of non-assisted firms.</p>	<p>Based on Statistics Canada Business Entry and Exit Tabulations (1989-1999) comparing ACOA client performances with overall Atlantic Canada businesses.</p> <p>Companies that cease operations include mergers, changes of ownership, failures and those not reporting income or not filing corporate tax returns.</p>
Tourism - Increase in Tourism Revenues	<p>Since 1994, promotions through the ACTP are estimated to have brought in \$173 million in incremental tourism revenues.</p> <p>Value for money is evident as the ACTP campaigns have resulted in \$9 of tourist expenditures for each dollar of media purchases.</p>	<p>Data based on independently commissioned studies.</p>
Trade - Increase Number of Exporters	<p>During the period 1998-2003, about 400 companies received ACOA support to begin exporting. Of those that became new exporters with BDP support, almost 80% have continuously exported over three to four years - more than 60% above the national average.</p>	<p>Based on in-house follow-up of companies supported by the BDP, COOPERATION and IBDA.</p>

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

ABSN:	Aboriginal Business Service Network	SCCYE:	Seed Capital ConneXion Program for Young Entrepreneurs
ACCED:	Atlantic Colleges Committee for Entrepreneurial Development	SCIF:	Strategic Community Investment Fund
ACOA:	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	SMEs:	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
ACTI:	Atlantic Canada Technology Initiative	SMRA:	Sydney Mines Renewal Association
ACTP:	Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership	TCA:	Team Canada Atlantic
AIF:	Atlantic Innovation Fund	TDPC:	Territorial Development Policy Committee
AIP:	Atlantic Investment Partnership	TEA:	The Exceptional Assistant
APRI:	Atlantic Policy Research Initiative	TPC:	Technology Partnerships Canada
ATIP:	Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership	UBDC:	University Business Development Centre
BDP:	Business Development Program	VMP:	Virtual Media Productions
CBDcs:	Community Business Development Corporations	WBI:	Women in Business Initiative
CBCS:	Canada Business Service Centres	YEDI:	Young Entrepreneur Development Initiative
CED:	Community Economic Development		
CEDAs:	Community Economic Development Agencies		
CED-Q:	Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions		
CF:	Community Futures Program		
CFAR:	Canadian Fisheries Adjustment and Restructuring Initiative		
CFI:	Canada Foundation for Innovation		
CIDA:	Canadian International Development Agency		
CRIMS:	Client Relationship Information Management System		
CSBF:	Canada Small Business Financing		
EBSDP:	Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development Partnership		
ECBC:	Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation		
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product		
GOL:	Government On-Line		
HRDC:	Human Resources Development Canada		
IBDA:	International Business Development Agreement		
IRBs:	Industrial Regional Benefits		
ISDI:	Innovation Skills Development Initiative		
JEDI:	Joint Economic Development Initiative		
MPHEC:	Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission		
NBTGI:	New Brunswick Training Group Incorporated		
NRC:	National Research Council		
NSBA:	Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association		
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development		
OLA:	<i>Official Languages Act</i>		
PAICC:	Pan-Atlantic Investment Co-ordination Committee		
R&D:	Research and Development		
REDcs:	Regional Economic Development Commissions		
REDOs:	Regional Economic Development Organizations		

Acronymes et abréviations employés dans le rapport

SECB :	Société d'expansion du Cap-Breton
SGIRC :	Système de gestion de l'information sur les relations avec la clientèle
SMRA :	Sydney Mines Renewal Association
VMP :	Virtual Media Productions
ACDI :	Agence canadienne de développement international
APCA :	Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique
CBDC :	Corporations de développement communautaire atlantique
CCADE :	Comité des collèges de l'Atlantique pour le développement entrepreneurial
CCICA :	Comité de coordination des investissements au Canada atlantique
CDER :	Commissions de développement économique régional
CESPM :	Commission de l'enseignement supérieur des provinces maritimes
CNRC :	Conseil national de recherches du Canada
CSEC :	Centres de services aux entreprises du Canada
CUAE :	Centre universitaire d'aide aux entreprises
DIMA :	Développement Île Madame Association
ECA :	Équipe Canada Atlantique
EPCE :	Entente sur la promotion du commerce extérieur
FIA :	Fonds d'innovation de l'Atlantique
FISC :	Fonds d'investissement stratégique dans les collectivités
GED :	Gouvernement en direct
GFNB :	Groupe de formation du Nouveau-Brunswick Inc.
IDCI :	Initiative de développement des compétences en innovation
IFA :	Initiative Femmes en affaires
IJE :	Initiative pour jeunes entrepreneurs
ITCA :	Initiative technologique du Canada atlantique
LLO :	<i>Loi sur les langues officielles</i>
NSBA :	Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association
OCDE :	Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques
ODEC :	Organisme de développement économique communautaire
PCAGJE :	Programme de capital d'appoint de Connexion jeunes entrepreneurs
PCICA :	Partenariat pour le commerce et l'investissement au Canada atlantique
PDE :	Programme de développement des entreprises au Canada atlantique
PEPCA :	Partenariat pour l'entrepreneurship et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires
PIB :	Produit intérieur brut
PICA :	Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique
PTCA :	Partenariat de l'industrie touristique du Canada atlantique
PME :	Petites et moyennes entreprises
RSEA :	Réseau des services aux entreprises autochtones

Indicateurs de rendement		Résultats et réalisations		Méthodologie	
Taux de survie des entreprises		<p>Les nouvelles entreprises qui reçoivent l'appui de l'APECA ont généralement une meilleure chance de survie.</p> <p>Le taux de survie après cinq ans d'exploitation des entreprises qui ont reçu de l'aide de l'APECA est deux fois et demi plus élevé que celui des entreprises qui n'ont pas reçu l'aide de l'APECA.</p> <p>Sont comprises parmi les entreprises qui cessent leurs activités : celles qui sont fusionnées ou aliénées, celles qui font faillite et celles qui ne déclarent pas de revenus ou qui ne produisent pas de déclarations d'impôt des sociétés.</p>		<p>Selon les données de Statistique Canada sur les entrées et les sorties des entreprises (1989 à 1999) qui comparent le rendement des clients de l'APECA à celui de l'ensemble des entreprises de la région de l'Atlantique.</p>	
Tourisme – Augmentation des revenus touristiques		<p>Depuis 1994, on estime que les activités de promotion réalisées grâce au PITCA ont engendré 173 millions de dollars en revenus touristiques supplémentaires.</p> <p>Il est évident que les campagnes du PITCA sont rentables puisqu'elles ont fait en sorte que chaque dollar investi en achat de médias a entraîné neuf dollars en revenus touristiques.</p>		Données établies d'après des études indépendantes.	
Commerce – Augmentation du nombre d'exportateurs		<p>Pendant la période de 1998 à 2003, environ 400 entreprises ont commencé à exporter grâce à l'appui de l'APECA. Parmi les nouveaux exportateurs bénéficiant de l'aide du PDE, presque 80 % ont exporté de façon continue sur une période de trois à quatre ans, et plus de 60 % ont dépassé la moyenne nationale.</p>		<p>D'après un suivi interne auprès des entreprises ayant reçu de l'aide dans le cadre du PDE, du programme de COOPÉRATION et de l'Entente sur la promotion du commerce extérieur.</p>	

Indicateurs de rendement	
Résultats et réalisations	Méthodologie
Avantage pour les contribuables	Entre 1998 et 2002, l'aide directe de l'APÉCA aux entreprises se chiffrait à 350 millions de dollars pour des recettes fiscales de plus de 500 millions de dollars.
	En 1998, PricewaterhouseCoopers a examiné les hypothèses sous-jacentes de cette méthodologie antérieure et a conclu que la méthode et les hypothèses de l'APÉCA étaient raisonnables et « qu'il serait possible d'élaborer une argumentation pour soutenir l'idée que la méthode et les hypothèses ont un caractère prudent (.). »
Accroissement des salaires	Sont inclus l'impôt sur le revenu des particuliers pour les salaires gagnés par les employés ainsi que les taxes de vente sur les achats faits par les entreprises et leurs employés.
	Les données sur l'incidence ne comprennent pas l'impôt des sociétés ni les économies approximatives pour le gouvernement au chapitre des paiements d'assurance-emploi ou des prestations d'aide sociale.
De 1989 à 1999, ³⁷ la masse salariale (une bonne mesure des revenus gagnés) s'est accrue de 65 % pour les clients de l'APÉCA, comparativement à 35 % pour toutes les entreprises de l'Atlantique.	Statistique Canada sur l'emploi, qui compare le rendement des clients de l'APÉCA à celui du Canada et de la région atlantique. Statistique Canada recueille et compare indépendamment des données aux termes d'un contrat avec l'APÉCA.
	37 Limite des données : il existe un intervalle parce que les données reposent sur les déclarations d'impôt des sociétés. Les données accessibles les plus récentes remontent à 1999.

Méthodologie	Résultats et réalisations	Indicateurs de rendement
<p>Une estimation du nombre réel d'emplois est calculée d'après l'incidence sur l'emploi de chaque projet pour les projets appuyant directement les entreprises. Le nombre d'emplois prévus est rajusté selon un facteur de 0,5 afin d'obtenir les gains d'emplois réels nets par entreprises. Ces facteurs proviennent du suivi de l'Agence sur le rendement des clients et il est corroboré par le suivi auprès des clients de l'APECA par Statistique Canada. Dans le cas du programme d'ADC, le facteur repose sur un sondage indépendant mené auprès des clients. Le nombre réel d'emplois est rajusté selon l'accroissement, 84 % pour le PDE et 53 % pour l'ADC. Le modèle du Conference Board génère un multiplicateur d'environ un, ce qui signifie que chaque emploi crée directement, crée un autre emploi grâce aux retombées économiques.</p> <p>Les emplois saisonniers et à temps partiel sont convertis en équivalents temps plein (1 600 heures/année) et en équivalents durables (durée de cinq ans).</p> <p>À l'aide des données sur l'emploi ci-dessus, la valeur ajoutée par employé (établie par le modèle) est entrée dans le modèle économétrique du Conference Board en vue d'évaluer l'incidence globale sur le PIB, sur le taux d'emploi total et sur les impôts.</p> <p>Les données sur l'emploi incluent uniquement les nouveaux emplois. Les calculs liés à l'emploi sont délibérément prudents :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - les emplois préservés sont exclus; - le facteur d'accroissement (84 %); - le BVG a déterminé qu'il y avait des indications à l'effet que la plupart des entreprises avaient besoin de l'aide du PDE; - le taux de défaillance : (exclut les emplois pour les projets du PDE qui ont échoué au cours de la période de cinq ans). - On retranche 2 à 3 % par année des emplois liés à l'ADC et au Programme de capital d'appoint de Connexion Jeunes entrepreneurs pour les échecs prévus, selon les radiations de prêts. - On a tenu compte de la double comptabilisation des emplois. 	<p>Le nombre total d'emploi était presque 20 000 de plus en 2002 qu'il ne l'aurait été sans l'aide directe de l'APECA aux entreprises.</p> <p>Le PIB total de l'Atlantique était évalué à 0,9 milliards de plus en 2002 qu'il ne l'aurait été sans l'aide directe de l'APECA aux entreprises.</p> <p>Pour chaque dollar investi directement dans les entreprises, par l'intermédiaire des programmes de l'APECA (PDE, ADC, Programme de capital d'appoint de Connexion Jeunes entrepreneurs et programme de COOPÉRATION), il y a eu une augmentation bien au-dessus de 5 \$ du PIB de l'Atlantique.</p> <p>Le modèle du Conference Board génère un multiplicateur d'environ un, ce qui signifie que chaque emploi crée directement, crée un autre emploi grâce aux retombées économiques.</p> <p>Les emplois saisonniers et à temps partiel sont convertis en équivalents temps plein (1 600 heures/année) et en équivalents durables (durée de cinq ans).</p> <p>À l'aide des données sur l'emploi ci-dessus, la valeur ajoutée par employé (établie par le modèle) est entrée dans le modèle économétrique du Conference Board en vue d'évaluer l'incidence globale sur le PIB, sur le taux d'emploi total et sur les impôts.</p> <p>Les données sur l'emploi incluent uniquement les nouveaux emplois. Les calculs liés à l'emploi sont délibérément prudents :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - les emplois préservés sont exclus; - le facteur d'accroissement (84 %); - le BVG a déterminé qu'il y avait des indications à l'effet que la plupart des entreprises avaient besoin de l'aide du PDE; - le taux de défaillance : (exclut les emplois pour les projets du PDE qui ont échoué au cours de la période de cinq ans). - On retranche 2 à 3 % par année des emplois liés à l'ADC et au Programme de capital d'appoint de Connexion Jeunes entrepreneurs pour les échecs prévus, selon les radiations de prêts. - On a tenu compte de la double comptabilisation des emplois. 	<p>Incidence sur le PIB de la région atlantique</p> <p>Emploi</p>

Emplois prévus et emplois réels créés

Grâce à son module de suivi des retombées du système de gestion de l'information sur les relations avec la clientèle, l'Agence sonde régulièrement le niveau d'emplois réels découlant du PDE auprès des clients ou des entreprises. Ces données sont comparées au niveau de référence de l'emploi au moment où l'aide a été accordée et au niveau prévu comme tenu du prêt de l'APBCA. Le suivi auprès du client est distinct de celui effectué au niveau du projet et fournit une évaluation du gain (de la perte) d'emplois net à l'échelle de l'entreprise qui est comparable au gain net (ou à la perte nette) enregistré par l'économie dans son ensemble.

Les données du module de suivi des retombées indiquent que, au cours de la période de 1998 à 2001, les clients ont atteint le taux de création d'emplois prévu dans une proportion de 65 pour cent. Ce facteur a été utilisé pour retrancher l'estimation des emplois créés à partir du PDE pour obtenir les emplois réels. Des données d'analyse de Statistique Canada sur le rendement des clients bénéficiant du PDE entre 1994 et 1998 corroborent cette estimation. En effet, ces données démontrent que les clients atteignaient un taux d'emploi de 68 pour cent de leurs estimations d'emplois créés.³⁵

Dans le cas du programme d'Aide au développement des collectivités, une étude indépendante menée auprès des entreprises ayant reçu de l'aide a évalué la création d'emplois réels à 59 pour cent des attentes.³⁶ Pour ce qui est du PDE, on détermine les clients ayant réussi grâce au processus de suivi de l'Agence et seuls les emplois associés à ces clients sont compris dans le dénombrement. Quant au programme d'Aide au

PARTIE II PRINCIPAUX RÉSULTATS ET RÉALISATIONS

développement des collectivités et au Programme de capital d'appoint de Connexion Jeunes entrepreneurs, tous deux administrés par un partenaire tiers, on utilise les radiations de prêts pour évaluer le taux de défaillance annuel. On retranche du nombre d'emplois créés prévus des taux annuels de 2 à 3 pour cent pour ces programmes (p. ex., 10 à 15 pour cent pour une période de cinq ans).

Dans la deuxième partie, on précise les principaux **Indicateurs de rendement** employés pour mesurer les résultats. Ce sont les indicateurs généraux utilisés pour tous les programmes à l'échelle de l'Agence afin de rendre compte du rendement et des réalisations d'ensemble de l'APBCA. Tous les programmes de l'APBCA sont évalués en fonction de l'un ou de plusieurs de ces principaux indicateurs, en sus des indicateurs propres à chaque programme.

Dans la deuxième colonne, on résume les principaux **Résultats et réalisations** compris dans le rapport. La troisième colonne fournit plus de détails sur la **Méthodologie** adoptée pour chacun des résultats signalés. Cette section comprend également des renseignements sur les hypothèses qui sous-tendent les évaluations de l'incidence économique, les définitions, les facteurs ou les taux utilisés dans les calculs, les limites et d'autres commentaires relatifs aux mesures utilisées.

Remarques sur la précision des estimations

a) Le modèle du Conference Board

Le modèle du Conference Board est un modèle économétrique applicable aux économies des provinces canadiennes. Chaque modèle provincial comporte environ vingt groupes industriels. Le principal avantage du modèle du Conference Board est que chaque province est modélisée de manière explicite. D'autres modèles économétriques disponibles déterminent les effets selon un modèle national, puis ils calculent l'activité provinciale en divisant l'activité nationale par un nombre fixe de parts attribuée à chaque province d'après les données historiques. Cette méthode de répartition atténuera vraisemblablement les effets des programmes comme ceux administrés par l'APBCA, qui modifient la part du produit intérieur brut (PIB) des provinces atlantiques dans une industrie donnée. Il est donc probable que l'évaluation des incidences pour la région atlantique soit plus exacte si l'on utilise le modèle du Conference Board.

Pour contribuer à la pertinence des données sur la situation des entreprises en l'absence d'une aide de l'APBCA, il est très utile de comparer des entreprises ayant obtenu de l'aide à des entreprises qui n'en ont pas obtenu. Cette méthodologie a l'avantage d'éliminer ou de réduire les conséquences des facteurs externes auxquels doivent faire face toutes les entreprises (p. ex. l'étape du cycle économique). La différence observée au niveau du rendement peut constituer une mesure de l'effet d'accroissement de l'aide gouvernementale.³³

Dans le cadre du présent rapport quinquennal, afin de pouvoir fournir une évaluation rigoureuse des répercussions du PDE, qui représentent une grande partie de la création d'emplois directs appuyés par l'Agence, Statistique Canada a fait le suivi du rendement des clients de l'APBCA et d'entreprises ne recevant pas d'aide. L'effet d'accroissement de 0,84 utilisé pour le PDE représente la partie de la croissance de l'emploi des entreprises appuyées par le PDE au cours de la période de 1998 à 2003 en excédent de la croissance des entreprises n'ayant pas reçu d'aide gouvernementale.

La conclusion de la vérification générale dans son rapport de vérification de l'APBCA de décembre 2001 vient appuyer cette évaluation en précisant qu'il y avait des indications à l'effet que la plupart des entreprises avaient besoin de l'aide du PDE.³⁴

b) Effet d'accroissement

Le modèle du Conference Board a été retenu en raison de l'importance de la modélisation précise de l'incidence régionale. Toutefois, le fait que ce modèle ne permette pas une désagrégation poussée par secteur industriel, vingt groupes industriels au lieu de plus de cent groupes pour certains modèles concurrents, limite quelque peu la précision. Par exemple, il n'y a aucune ventilation possible par sous-secteur de la fabrication, ce qui veut dire que l'on utilise la moyenne de la valeur ajoutée par employé pour tout le secteur de la fabrication. Cette moyenne donne lieu à une évaluation raisonnable, voire même prudente, en raison des données de Statistique Canada qui indiquent que la valeur ajoutée par employé pour les clients de l'APBCA dépasse la moyenne de toutes les entreprises de fabrication en Atlantique.³⁵

Lorsqu'un investissement est consenti à une entreprise, il est toujours possible que l'investissement aurait été effectué même sans l'aide du gouvernement. Si l'investissement aurait été effectué de toute façon, l'effet de la participation du gouvernement serait tout

simplement d'ajouter à l'avoir de l'entrepreneur. L'APBCA tente habituellement de mesurer l'effet d'accroissement en posant des questions post facto telles que : « Cet investissement aurait-il été effectué sans l'aide de l'APBCA? » et « Si l'investissement avait été effectué de toute façon, aurait-il été retardé faute d'aide gouvernementale? »

Le modèle du Conference Board est un modèle économétrique applicable aux économies des provinces canadiennes. Chaque modèle provincial comporte environ vingt groupes industriels. Le principal avantage du modèle du Conference Board est que chaque province est modélisée de manière explicite. D'autres modèles économétriques disponibles déterminent les effets selon un modèle national, puis ils calculent l'activité provinciale en divisant l'activité nationale par un nombre fixe de parts attribuée à chaque province d'après les données historiques. Cette méthode de répartition atténuera vraisemblablement les effets des programmes comme ceux administrés par l'APBCA, qui modifient la part du produit intérieur brut (PIB) des provinces atlantiques dans une industrie donnée. Il est donc probable que l'évaluation des incidences pour la région atlantique soit plus exacte si l'on utilise le modèle du Conference Board.

Pour contribuer à la pertinence des données sur la situation des entreprises en l'absence d'une aide de l'APBCA, il est très utile de comparer des entreprises ayant obtenu de l'aide à des entreprises qui n'en ont pas obtenu. Cette méthodologie a l'avantage d'éliminer ou de réduire les conséquences des facteurs externes auxquels doivent faire face toutes les entreprises (p. ex. l'étape du cycle économique). La différence observée au niveau du rendement peut constituer une mesure de l'effet d'accroissement de l'aide gouvernementale.³³

Dans le cadre du présent rapport quinquennal, afin de pouvoir fournir une évaluation rigoureuse des répercussions du PDE, qui représentent une grande partie de la création d'emplois directs appuyés par l'Agence, Statistique Canada a fait le suivi du rendement des clients de l'APBCA et d'entreprises ne recevant pas d'aide. L'effet d'accroissement de 0,84 utilisé pour le PDE représente la partie de la croissance de l'emploi des entreprises appuyées par le PDE au cours de la période de 1998 à 2003 en excédent de la croissance des entreprises n'ayant pas reçu d'aide gouvernementale.

La conclusion de la vérification générale dans son rapport de vérification de l'APBCA de décembre 2001 vient appuyer cette évaluation en précisant qu'il y avait des indications à l'effet que la plupart des entreprises avaient besoin de l'aide du PDE.³⁴

22 Dynamique de l'emploi de Statistique Canada.
33 On peut trouver une analyse fort utile de l'estimation de l'impact de l'investissement en développement économique.
34 Rapport de la vérification générale du Canada à la Chambre des Communes, Chapitre 6 sur l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique -
35 Public Support to Small Business in Developed Economies, de David J. Storey, présenté à la Mikkeili Conference on Growth and Job Creation in SME, du 7 au 9 janvier 1998.



ANNEXE TECHNIQUE SUR LA MÉTHODOLOGIE ET LA DÉMARCHE ADOPTEES

INTRODUCTION

Les pages qui suivent renferment deux sections décrivant la méthodologie adoptée pour évaluer l'incidence économique des programmes de l'APÉCA sur l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique, telle que rapportée dans le présent Rapport quinquennal présenté au Parlement. La démarche adoptée est une amélioration de la méthodologie utilisée par l'Agence dans son Rapport quinquennal présenté au Parlement pour la période de 1993 à 1998.

Partie I - Méthodologie pour l'évaluation de l'incidence économique

Méthode	Résultats
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Base de données de l'Agence et données de Statistique Canada sur les comportements d'investissement	• Dépenses par projet - APÉCA seulement et total par province et secteur industriel
Données de Statistique Canada sur le Non entre les emplois, les ventes, les salaires et la valeur ajoutée selon le secteur industriel	• Augmentation de la valeur ajoutée directe par secteur industriel, par province
Données de poursuite de Statistique Canada sur les clients de l'APÉCA et évaluations des programmes	• Apport d'emplois réels et directs créés
Données de poursuite de Statistique Canada sur les clients de l'APÉCA et évaluations des programmes	• Incidence supplémentaire des projets sur les dépenses d'investissement, les ventes, les exportations et les nouvelles PME ³¹

Données de Statistique Canada sur les entrées et sorties des entreprises, données de l'Agence sur les taux de déflation des projets	• Augmentation de la valeur ajoutée par secteur et par province, rajustée selon le taux de déflation des projets
Modèle économétrique des services atlantiques du Conférence Board du Canada - variables de l'investissement et de la valeur ajoutée rajustées à la hausse selon l'augmentation des investissements et la valeur ajoutée par secteur; rajustées pour le taux de déflation	• Incidence globale, notamment les effets indirects et les effets induits sur le PIB, l'emploi et les recettes fiscales

30 Il est important de faire une distinction entre les dépenses dans les investissements de la construction, l'achat d'équipement et de machines ainsi que les frais d'exploitation étant donné que l'incidence sur l'économie de l'Atlantique varie selon la catégorie. Dans le cas des dépenses ayant trait à l'équipement et aux machines, la plupart des dépenses de fabrication et l'équipement seraient engagées à l'extérieur du Canada atlantique, ce qui entraînerait que très peu d'avantages indirects et induits. Les investissements en construction et les frais d'exploitation auraient un impact relativement plus élevé puisque la main-d'œuvre et le matériel locaux seraient plus largement utilisés. Le Bureau du vérificateur général, dans son rapport en date de novembre 1995, au chapitre 18, définit l'effet d'accroissement comme suit : « on entend par besoin d'aide ou effet d'accroissement la probabilité qu'un projet ne serait pas mis en oeuvre à la même échelle, au même moment et au même endroit, sans aide gouvernementale. »

31 Le Bureau du vérificateur général, dans son rapport en date de novembre 1995, au chapitre 18, définit l'effet d'accroissement comme suit : « on entend par besoin d'aide ou effet d'accroissement la probabilité qu'un projet ne serait pas mis en oeuvre à la même échelle, au même moment et au même endroit, sans aide gouvernementale. »



SECTION 4 - ANNEXE TECHNIQUE SUR LA MÉTHODOLOGIE ET LA DÉMARCHE ADOPTEES



L'accès aux capitaux était l'un des rôles pour lesquels l'APBCA avait explicitement été créée en 1987, et il demeure au cœur de son travail. L'APBCA complètera l'offre de prêts remboursables aux entreprises par le biais du PDE par diverses autres méthodes d'accès aux capitaux, notamment des fonds de capitaux de risque et des prêts locaux assurés par les CBD. Les établissements financiers continueront de fermer leurs portes dans de nombreuses collectivités isolées et de moindre envergure, et quelque'un devra combler les lacunes; l'APBCA est bien placée pour apporter son aide. L'accès aux capitaux doit toujours tenir compte de l'immense diversité des nouvelles entreprises de technologie jusqu'aux entreprises déjà établies dans des secteurs traditionnels, qui toutes ont des exigences et des besoins différents.

Voilà les piliers de la structure qui soutient l'APBCA dans ses activités de développement économique. Elle concentre ses efforts surtout sur la mise en valeur de l'esprit d'entreprise et des compétences en affaires, offrant à la population de la région de l'Atlantique la chance de tirer profit d'une large gamme de possibilités d'entreprises et d'emplois. Elles favorisent l'innovation, tant la mise au point de nouveaux produits et procédés que leur adoption par des entreprises nouvelles ou déjà établies. De cette

manière, la productivité des travailleurs augmentera, rendant ainsi les entreprises de la région plus efficaces et plus concurrentielles sur les marchés étrangers. Il faut saisir la possibilité d'accroître les exportations et de pénétrer de nouveaux marchés.

Rien de tout cela ne peut se produire sans orientation, sans une saine gestion et sans un ensemble varié de mesures d'aide. Une grande partie de ces réalisations vient des entrepreneurs et des équipes de gestion qu'ils forment. À l'échelle opérationnelle, les employés de l'APBCA aident à constituer ces équipes, offrent des capitaux et des conseils et ouvrent des portes qui resteraient autrement fermées. À l'échelle stratégique, les membres du Conseil consultatif de l'APBCA, qui sont eux-mêmes des entrepreneurs prospères et des professionnels du milieu des affaires, apportent orientation et aide en responsable de l'APBCA sur un large éventail de questions et d'orientations stratégiques. Ensemble, ces deux groupes de personnes dévouées ont aidé des milliers de Canadiennes et de Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique, au cours des cinq dernières années, à réaliser leur rêve – celui de posséder et d'exploiter des entreprises prospères ou celui d'améliorer non seulement leur vie, mais aussi celle des collectivités où ils vivent, aujourd'hui et demain.

L'entrepreneursip et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires demeureront au cœur des efforts de l'APÉCA en matière de développement économique. L'un des motifs justifiant la création de l'APÉCA en 1987 était de mettre à profit le bassin d'entrepreneurs de l'Atlantique et de donner aux particuliers de la région les outils nécessaires pour commencer à réaliser leurs rêves. Le perfectionnement des compétences est indispensable à la croissance économique, et l'APÉCA doit créer et entretenir des partenariats avec les universités et les collèges pour favoriser cette croissance. La gestion de l'innovation dans les entreprises nécessite une attention spéciale, tout comme le développement des microthèmes. Deux volets du Partenariat pour l'entrepreneursip et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires du PICA mettront l'accent sur le perfectionnement des compétences en gestion chez les femmes et chez les jeunes.

L'innovation est résolument placée à l'avant-plan des programmes de développement économique, non seulement dans la région de l'Atlantique, mais partout au Canada. À l'issue des deux demandes de propositions lancées dans le cadre du Fonds d'innovation de l'Atlantique (FIA), l'APÉCA et ses partenaires ont reçu un très grand nombre de propositions, ce qui démontre une ferme volonté de la part des universités, des instituts de recherche et des entreprises de la région d'entamer des recherches de pointe. Il est toutefois déjà temps de penser à un successeur au FIA qui devra continuer de mettre l'accent sur le renforcement du réseau et de la capacité de recherche-développement et d'innovation dans la région de l'Atlantique, accroître le nombre de travailleurs qualifiés et améliorer leur capacité de commercialiser les nouveaux produits et procédés.

Le développement économique des collectivités offre un amalgame de défis particulièrement intéressants. Les programmes de l'APÉCA ont depuis toujours été axés davantage sur les collectivités rurales et les petites villes de l'Atlantique et où les besoins en développement sont les plus pressants. Les villes ont récemment beaucoup retenu l'attention dans le débat politique au Canada, parce qu'elles influencent la croissance économique et qu'elles sont habituellement à leur part de population et de la nouvelle économie. Ce sont également des centres d'apprentissage, de soins de santé, de recherche-développement, de culture et de divertissements, et elles offrent bon nombre des services aux entreprises et des

services personnels que la population de l'Atlantique tient maintenant pour acquis. L'APÉCA doit reconnaître l'importance des villes dans le développement économique sans pour autant négliger ses clients des régions rurales et des petites villes.

De plus en plus, le développement économique chevauche le développement social dans les collectivités. Le mandat de l'APÉCA porte sur le développement économique, mais il est souvent impossible d'y travailler sans toucher à des questions qui ont des répercussions sur le plan social. Dans son budget de 2003, le gouvernement du Canada a indiqué qu'il accordait une importance renouvelée aux programmes sociaux, et l'APÉCA appuiera cette orientation dans tous les cas où les enjeux sociaux auront une composante économique. Il faudra accorder une importance accrue au recrutement d'immigrants dans les collectivités de la région de l'Atlantique pour contre le vieillissement de la population.

Le tourisme continuera de présenter des possibilités de croissance économique dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. Cette croissance sera fondée sur le milieu naturel de la région, sa diversité culturelle, son histoire humaine et sa solide infrastructure touristique, y compris pour les voyages d'affaires et les congrès. Tout comme pour le commerce et l'investissement, une croissance accrue du Partenariat du tourisme du Canada atlantique auquel participent les gouvernements et le secteur privé continuera de favoriser le marketing et la promotion sur divers marchés étrangers. De nombreux secteurs bénéficieront de l'intensification du tourisme, notamment l'hébergement, les transports, le commerce de détail, les services de restauration, les arts et la culture, de même que les loisirs.

Le commerce et l'investissement sont devenus des éléments clés des activités de l'APÉCA. Il demeurera essentiel d'en faire la promotion pour stimuler le développement économique. Tous les efforts pour déployer, qu'il s'agisse de favoriser les exportations ou de stimuler de nouveaux investissements étrangers, dépendront des liens qu'établira la région avec les États-Unis, mais ils viseront également à élargir les horizons vers d'autres régions du monde. Pour atteindre cet objectif, l'APÉCA compte sur les missions d'équipe Canada atlantique et la promotion des compétences des PME de l'Atlantique en marketing des exportations.



L'APCA n'est pas devenue un chef de file du développement économique de la région de l'Atlantique en restant inactif. Elle y est parvenue parce qu'elle s'est montée souple et capable d'adaptation, parce qu'elle a tenu compte de l'évolution du milieu dans lequel elle exerce ses activités et parce qu'elle a constamment incité ses employés à toujours faire mieux, et sans jamais se reposer sur ses lauriers.

Un objectif n'a jamais changé dans le mandat de l'APCA, et c'est celui de multiplier les débouchés économiques dans la région de l'Atlantique. Cet objectif est prévu dans la *Loi sur l'APCA*, et il demeure le fondement même de tout son travail. Pour atteindre cet objectif, l'Agence a besoin d'un ensemble clair de priorités stratégiques, périodiquement revues et renouvelées, pour orienter ses activités quotidiennes. Le présent rapport est axé sur ces priorités. De nouveaux programmes sont élaborés en fonction de ces objectifs, et le personnel de l'Agence ne doit jamais les perdre de vue.

Un objectif n'a jamais changé dans le mandat de l'APCA, et c'est celui de multiplier les débouchés économiques dans la région de l'Atlantique.

Le présent rapport constitue une rétrospective et rend compte du rendement de l'APCA pendant ces cinq dernières années, mais il offre aussi une occasion de se tourner vers l'avenir. Cette perspective d'avenir ne se trouve pas dans une bouteille de cristal; elle est fermement ancrée dans les réalisations du passé récent, dans les programmes et les mesures que l'APCA offre déjà, dans les priorités fédérales actuelles et dans tout un train de tendances actuelles sur lesquelles l'APCA exerce une certaine maîtrise. Nous ne pouvons pas revenir en arrière ni changer le fait que la population de la région de l'Atlantique vieillit, mais nous pouvons faire plus pour attirer de nouvelles personnes qui viendront s'établir dans la région, avec leur famille et leurs compétences. Nous pouvons encourager les pratiques novatrices chez les petites et moyennes entreprises (PME) et orienter les entrepreneurs et les gestionnaires dans de nouvelles directions. Nous pouvons, dans le même ordre d'idées, épauler les collectivités qui cherchent des moyens de promouvoir leur économie et aider à retenir dans la région les jeunes gens en leur offrant des possibilités d'emploi.

présent rapport.

La politique, la défense des intérêts et la

coordination se poursuivront et continueront d'évoluer au cœur de toutes les entreprises de l'APCA. L'élaboration des politiques doit demeurer focalisée, même à l'intérieur de priorités qui peuvent changer. Il faut fixer des priorités, les revoir fréquemment et mettre en œuvre ses décisions stratégiques de concert avec des partenaires. L'Agence continuera de défendre les intérêts de la région de l'Atlantique dans le débat national ainsi que de maximiser pour les entreprises les retombées régionales des grands marchés publics fédéraux.

La coordination se fait à des niveaux multiples et comprend les concepts de l'horizontalité et du rôle de l'APCA en tant que plaque tournante régionale. L'objectif de la coordination consiste à promouvoir une approche panatlantique pour régler des dossiers d'intérêt commun. Pour ce faire, il faut nécessairement travailler avec des partenaires, notamment les gouvernements provinciaux, d'autres ministères fédéraux, les municipalités, les organismes non gouvernementaux et le secteur privé. Ces partenariats doivent être constamment mis à contribution, ce qui exige une forte convergence vers les enjeux et la coordination des mesures prises à leur égard. Il surgit constamment de nouveaux enjeux, et l'un de ceux qui retiendra l'attention de l'APCA au cours des prochains années a trait aux moyens que la région de l'Atlantique peut prendre pour attirer et garder davantage d'immigrants. Un autre enjeu est celui du maintien de relations constructives avec les gouvernements provinciaux, maintenant que les ententes de développement économique ont été remplacées par de nouveaux mécanismes d'exécution des programmes de développement.

L'APCA continuera d'appuyer les objectifs fédéraux. L'exécution des programmes fédéraux fait partie intégrante des activités de l'APCA, et son rôle à cet égard revêtira probablement de plus en plus d'importance. Les initiatives horizontales, par exemple les programmes ruraux et le changement climatique, nécessiteront toujours une intervention régionale, et l'APCA y contribuera dans la région de l'Atlantique. Diverses ententes conclues avec d'autres ministères fédéraux de la région lui permettront de coordonner les efforts de développement économique.

Rendement pour le contribuable

La figure 22 comprend l'impôt sur le revenu des particuliers gagné par les employés, ainsi que les taxes de vente sur les achats faits par les entreprises et leurs employés. Il est à noter que ces recettes fiscales ne comprennent pas l'impôt des sociétés qui, pour des raisons techniques, ne peut être calculé par le modèle du Conférence Board. Pour obtenir des estimations prudentes, l'APFCA n'a pas tenu compte des économies qu'aurait pu réaliser le gouvernement en versements d'assurance-emploi grâce aux emplois additionnels créés par les entreprises soutenues par l'APFCA.

Pendant la période quinquennale de 1998 à 2002, des dépenses d'environ 500 millions de dollars ont produit des recettes fiscales dépassant les 600 millions de dollars.

Le calcul de l'impact net ne tient pas compte d'aucun remboursement des contributions versées par l'APFCA qui sont remboursées, ce qui donnerait un impact beaucoup plus important.

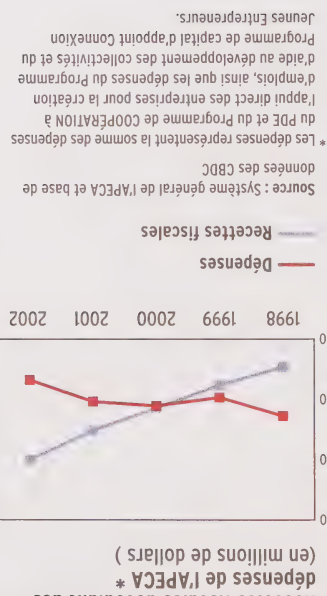
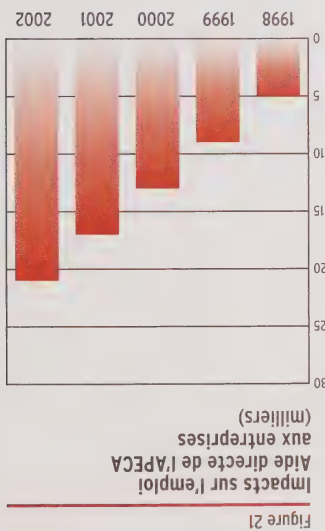


Figure 22

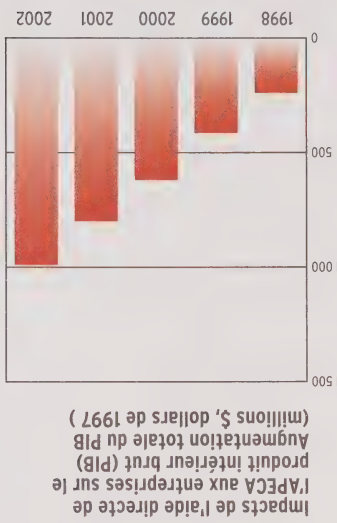
Impacts sur l'emploi
En 2002, l'aide accordée directement aux petites entreprises par l'APFCA a permis de créer 20 000 nouveaux emplois (directs, indirects et induits) qui n'auraient pas pu être créés autrement (Figure 21).



SOURCE : APFCA – Voir la section 4 pour plus de renseignements

6. L'APFCA a tenu compte de la « double comptabilisation » des nouveaux emplois créés, tant entre les programmes de l'APFCA qu'entre ceux qui sont administrés conjointement par l'APFCA, par d'autres ministères fédéraux et par les gouvernements provinciaux. Les sondages ont montré que, dans 15 % des cas, des projets d'aide au développement des collectivités avaient également reçu des fonds du PDE²⁸ : le nombre de nouveaux emplois liés au Programme d'aide au développement des collectivités a donc été réduit de 15 %. Dans le cas des projets où le financement de l'APFCA est associé à d'autres fonds publics, la proportion du nombre total d'emplois créés par suite de l'aide de l'APFCA est égale à la part de fonds publics investis par l'APFCA dans le projet.

Impacts sur le produit intérieur brut
Les impacts sur le PIB sont illustrés à la figure 20. On estime que, en dollars constants de 1997, le PIB est presque un milliard de dollars plus élevé annuellement en 2002 qu'il ne l'aurait été en l'absence des dépenses de l'APFCA en soutien direct aux entreprises. Pendant la période quinquennale, chaque dollar que l'APFCA a investi dans les entreprises a généré des augmentations annuelles accumulées totales de plus de 5 \$ en gains du PIB.



SOURCE : APFCA – Voir la section 4 pour plus de renseignements

L'aide accordée aux entreprises par l'APÉCA dans le cadre du Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE), des ententes de COOPÉRATION, du Programme d'aide au capital d'appoint Connexion Jeunes Entrepreneurs a directement contribué à la création d'emplois. Les données sur le nombre d'emplois créés peut être converti en retombées totales pour la région de l'Atlantique. Pour ce faire, il faut traduire les emplois en une mesure sectorielle de l'impact à valeur ajoutée. Les impacts par secteur sont inscrits dans le modèle du Conference Board du Canada pour déterminer les retombées sur le revenu gagné dans la région, selon le PIB. Il est aussi possible d'évaluer de la même manière d'autres effets macroéconomiques, en particulier les retombées sur les impôts et le nombre total d'emplois.

Il importe de signaler plusieurs caractéristiques de ces estimations :

1. Seuls les emplois véritablement créés sont utilisés dans le calcul des retombées. Les emplois réels créés dans les entreprises sont comptabilisés d'après le module de suivi des retombées du Système de gestion de l'information sur les relations avec la clientèle (SGIRC) et à partir des données recueillies par les sondages indépendants auprès des clients. En ce qui concerne le PDE, les estimations tiennent compte du fait que les clients ont réalisé environ 65 % des gains prévus.²⁸ Cette estimation est prudente, car de nombreux projets ne sont pas encore terminés et devraient produire d'autres gains, lorsque les plans d'entreprise auront été entièrement mis en œuvre.
2. Les emplois préservés, même s'ils produisent des avantages économiques réels, sont exclus, parce qu'il est difficile d'obtenir une mesure fiable de leur impact.
3. Les incidences sur l'emploi et l'économie sont celles qui découlent uniquement des projets fructueux. Les dépenses de l'APÉCA comprennent toutefois les sommes investies dans tous les projets, y compris ceux qui ont échoué.

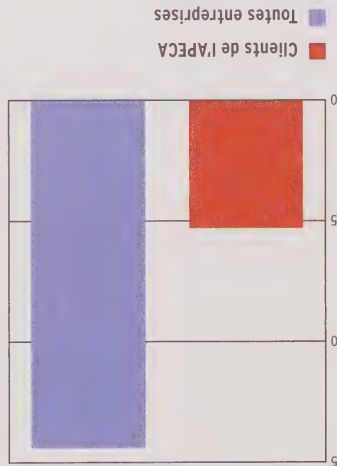


4. Sont inclus uniquement les impacts des projets différentiels, tels qu'ils sont calculés d'après les données de Statistique Canada sur la croissance des entreprises soutenues par l'APÉCA par opposition à toutes les entreprises et selon les résultats des sondages indépendants auprès des clients. Par exemple, l'APÉCA utilise une estimation de 0,84 comme apport différentiel. Autrement dit, seulement 84 des 100 emplois créés dans une entreprise sont comptabilisés dans le compte final de l'APÉCA.

5. Les retombées comprennent la création d'emplois directs dans les entreprises soutenues par l'APÉCA, ainsi que les emplois indirects et induits, selon les estimations utilisées dans le modèle du Conference Board. Il y a retombées indirectes et induites lorsque les entreprises appuyées par l'APÉCA achètent des produits et des services auprès de leur fournisseurs et que les revenus liés à la création d'emplois directs sont plusieurs fois dépensés dans l'ensemble de l'économie. Cet impact, appelé « multiplicateur », se chiffre à 1,0 environ, ce qui signifie qu'un emploi est créé grâce aux retombées indirectes et induites pour chaque emploi direct créé grâce aux sommes versées par l'APÉCA.

Croissance de l'emploi en fabrication 2002 contre 1997 (milliers)

Figure 19



SOURCE : Module de suivi des retombées du SGIRC de l'APCA et Statistique Canada. Les gains enregistrés par les clients de l'APCA sont des gains réels, c'est-à-dire, des emplois additionnels.

L'aéroporale a pris de l'expansion et est devenue un moteur important de l'économie de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. Les exportations de produits et de pièces pour l'industrie de l'aéroporale ont totalisé 118 millions de dollars en 2002 dans la région de l'Atlantique, plus du double de la valeur déclarée en 1997.

Les taux de croissance ont été encore plus impressionnants dans les entreprises qui fabriquent des produits du bois. On a, par exemple, enregistré une hausse de près de 140 % des exportations de bois de placage, de contreplaqué et de bois de haute technologie – leur valeur est passée de 103 millions de dollars en 1997 à 244 millions de dollars en 2002.

D'autres entreprises du secteur de la fabrication ont obtenu un très bon rendement, notamment celles qui fabriquent des instruments de navigation, des instruments de mesure, des instruments médicaux et des mécanismes de commande (exportations en hausse de 220 %, valeur de 80 millions de dollars au cours des cinq dernières années) ainsi que des produits en métal décoratifs et architecturaux (exportations en hausse de 380 %, valeur de 87,1 millions de dollars).

Un autre secteur est celui des produits alimentaires. Les exportations d'aliments surgelés ont augmenté de 48 % et ont atteint 435 millions de dollars pendant la période quinquennale, avec en tête de file les pommes de terre transformées de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard.

Le secteur de la fabrication des produits de charpente usinés a également enregistré une hausse substantielle pendant la période visée par le présent rapport, soit une augmentation de 200 % des exportations entre 1997 et 2002. Le secteur de la fabrication a profité du renforcement de la capacité de production dans les entreprises du papier et du caoutchouc de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

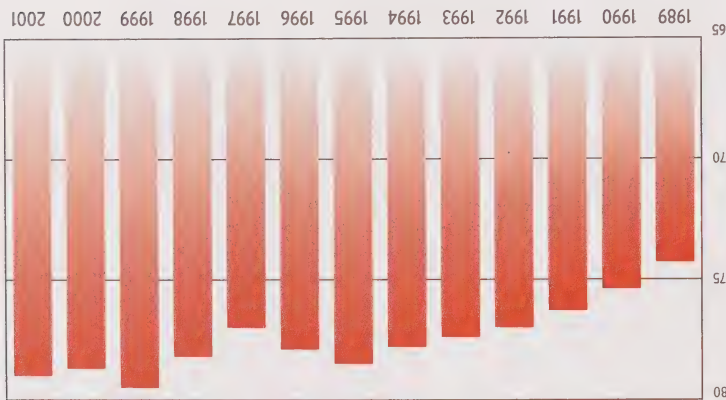
Le tourisme est un autre secteur qui a connu une forte performance dans l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique dans les cinq dernières années. Compte tenu d'une augmentation de 35 % du nombre de visiteurs pendant cette même période, les dépenses totales des non-résidents se sont accrues de 37 %, passant de 2,30 milliards de dollars en 1997 à 3,16 milliards de dollars en 2002. Dans le secteur de l'hébergement, le nombre d'emplois s'est accru de 2 500 au cours de la période de 1997 à 2002.

Le secteur régional de l'aquaculture a connu un essor considérable pendant la période. Les exportations ont totalisé 187 millions de dollars en 2002, en hausse de 46 % par rapport à 1997. L'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et le Nouveau-Brunswick ont, en particulier, enregistré une forte croissance de la mytiliculture et de la salomoniculture. À Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, où l'on a beaucoup mis l'accent sur la recherche-développement et les services d'extension dans les cinq dernières années, l'aquaculture devrait considérablement contribuer à la croissance future de ce secteur en Atlantique.

Globalement, l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique a affiché un excellent rendement au cours des cinq dernières années. Compte tenu du fait que le Canada lui-même a obtenu un meilleur rendement que la plupart des pays industriels, la période s'est avérée très bonne pour la région. On constate une diversification dans chacune des provinces de l'Atlantique, tandis que de nouveaux débouchés continuent de voir le jour dans les secteurs des ressources naturelles et qu'un nombre croissant d'entreprises se tournent vers les marchés d'exportation pour prendre de l'expansion.

Figure 18

Région de l'Atlantique 1989-2001
(par habitant en pourcentage du Canada)



En 2002, la région comptait 112 000 travailleurs occupés de plus qu'en 1997, et plus de 95 % d'entre eux occupaient des emplois à temps plein. Le taux d'activité de la région est passé de 58,5 % en 1997 à 62,4 % en 2002, un record. De même, le taux d'emploi de la région est passé de 50,4 % en 1997 à 55,1 % en 2002. Ce gain de 4,7 points de pourcentage était considérablement plus élevé que le gain national de 2,8, ce qui a réduit l'écart entre la région et le Canada en général.

Grâce à la confiance accrue en l'économie de l'Atlantique, le taux d'activité a atteint des sommets record pendant la période : il est passé de 58,5 % en 1997 à 62,4 % en 2002. Même si le taux d'activité a été beaucoup plus élevé, le taux de chômage a diminué de plus de deux points, passant de 13,9 % en 1997 à 11,6 % en 2002.

Dans la région de l'Atlantique, le nombre de chômeurs est passé de 152 000 en 1997 à 139 000 en 2002, une diminution de 13 000 personnes. Le taux de chômage a aussi diminué, passant de 13,9 % en 1997 à 11,6 % en 2002, l'un des niveaux les plus faibles depuis le début des années 1980. Pendant la même période, le taux de chômage au Canada est passé de 9,1 % en 1997 à 7,7 % en 2002.

L'économie de la région se diversifie de plus en plus. Dans chacune des provinces de l'Atlantique, de nouvelles entreprises axées sur l'exportation ont vu le jour, créant des emplois et enrichissant la région.

Le secteur de la fabrication a enregistré un solide rendement au cours des cinq dernières années. Le PIB réel du secteur de la fabrication est passé de 4,98 milliards de dollars en 1997 à 5,95 milliards de dollars en 2002, et les emplois ont augmenté de presque 15 000. Un peu plus du tiers de ces emplois ont été créés dans des entreprises ayant reçu l'aide de l'APFCA (voir la figure 19). Plusieurs entreprises du secteur de la fabrication ont contribué à l'amélioration du rendement. À Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, le secteur pétrolier est devenu un catalyseur de la croissance dans les secteurs professionnels, scientifiques et techniques, de même que dans ceux de la construction de bateaux et de la transformation des métaux. La construction des superstructures nécessaires au troisième grand projet d'exploitation du pétrole extracôtier de la province (White Rose) s'effectue dans une proportion de 80 % à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, ce qui témoigne des capacités croissantes de fabrication technique et industrielle dans l'économie régionale.

CROISSANCE ÉCONOMIQUE DANS LES PROVINCES DE L'ATLANTIQUE ET IMPACT DE L'APECA

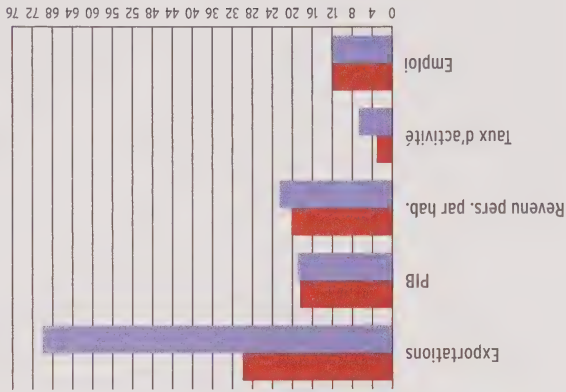
CROISSANCE ÉCONOMIQUE

Le produit intérieur brut (PIB) réel a augmenté à un rythme annuel moyen de 3,8 % entre 1998 et 2002, devançant légèrement le taux national de 3,7 %. Au total, le PIB a augmenté de 9,2 milliards de dollars pendant la période visée par le présent rapport, passant de 45,6 milliards de dollars en 1997 à 54,8 milliards de dollars en 2002.

L'économie de la région de l'Atlantique a affiché un taux de croissance annuel moyen de 3,8 % entre 1998 et 2002, devançant légèrement le taux national de 3,7 %.

Figure 16

Écart en pourcentage des principaux indicateurs économiques - 2002 contre 1997



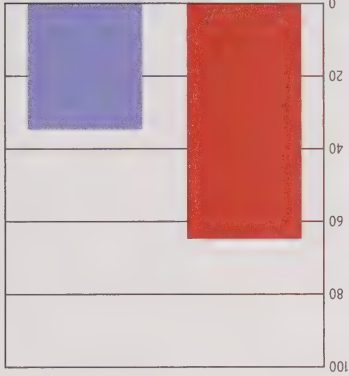
Source : Statistique Canada

L'industrie des combustibles minéraux arrive en tête et représente 18 % des gains, suivie par les services commerciaux (13 % de la croissance totale) et la fabrication (8 %).

Figure 17

Augmentation de la masse 1989-2000

Tous les secteurs*



Source : Dynamique de l'emploi de Statistique Canada
* L'exclusion des services gouvernementaux

Le revenu gagné par habitant dans la région est passé de 78,2 % de la moyenne nationale en 1998 à 79 % en 2001. Il dépasse presque de cinq points de pourcentage celui de 1989, qui était de 74,3 %.

Plusieurs grands projets d'investissement étaient liés à la construction routière, et à la fabrication. L'essor de la production pétrolière et gazière au large des côtes a eu des répercussions dans toute l'économie de l'Atlantique, en particulier dans les secteurs de la construction et des services aux entreprises.

La forte croissance du rendement dans les secteurs de la pêche, des transports, des communications et du tourisme a également soutenu l'activité économique régionale.

Les données de Statistique Canada sur la croissance de la masse salariale des entreprises ayant reçu une aide de l'APECA et des autres entreprises prouvent que les programmes de l'Agence influent sur la croissance des revenus dans la région. L'augmentation de la masse salariale (une mesure proche du revenu gagné) dans les entreprises soutenues par l'APECA était presque le double de celle des entreprises qui n'ont pas reçu d'aide (1989-2000).

Ces dernières années, l'APCA a aidé la société à se doter des entrepôts nécessaires, à intensifier ses activités de sciage de feuillus et à moderniser son équipement. Dernièrement, elle a consenti une aide financière grâce à laquelle l'entreprise pourra faire appel aux services d'essais du Centre de la science et de la technologie du bois de l'Université du Nouveau-Brunswick afin de déterminer la capacité de nouveaux équipements sur le marché et d'améliorer ainsi la rentabilité de la production de palettes.

« Nous n'avions ici auparavant qu'une scierie et nous avons examiné la possibilité d'ajouter de la valeur à ce que nous faisons. Cette valorisation est indispensable à notre entreprise aujourd'hui. L'APCA nous a aidés à nous rendre là où nous sommes aujourd'hui. »

Jean-Claude Savoie, PDG, Groupe Savoie Inc. (Nouveau-Brunswick)





Norvège.

vingt-trois ans plus tard, l'entreprise, qui compte maintenant 450 employés, possède deux scieries de feuillus, une usine de fabrication de palettes et une usine de dimensionnement qui produit des composants en bois à valeur ajoutée pour les fabricants de meubles, d'armoires de cuisine, de cadeaux et de revêtements de plancher en bois. Groupe Savoje Inc., qui exporte actuellement plus de 50 % de ses produits en Europe et aux États-Unis, s'est maintenant tournée vers l'Asie et cherche à s'arroger une plus grande part du marché en Europe, notamment en Allemagne, en Belgique et en

1980, avec 25 employés et un équipement de base pour Jean-Claude Savoje a lancé sa petite scierie à St-Quentin en

Groupe Savoje Inc., Nouveau-Brunswick

475 000 \$ de l'APECA.

Cette entreprise a besoin d'investissements importants et doit se tenir au fait des nouvelles technologies. Elle a pu construire ce nouvel entrepôt grâce à un prêt de

« Ce projet a donné à Nova Agri la possibilité de commercialiser une nouvelle technologie. Nous avons ainsi doublé nos exportations au Royaume-Uni et en Islande en 2002. »

Eari Kidston, président de Nova Agri

L'entreprise, qui travaille en collaboration avec Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada et les responsables du Programme d'aide à la recherche industrielle du Centre national de recherches du Canada, a mis au point les méthodes et les techniques nécessaires pour prolonger de quelque dix semaines la durée de conservation des bleuets cultivés. Il a fallu, pour ce faire, concevoir les conditions atmosphériques nécessaires aux bleuets et mettre au point un type de contenant pour emballer et expédier les produits. En 2002, le groupe de conception a reçu un prix du programme Partenaires en transfert de technologie.

Les activités principales de l'entreprise sont l'entreposage, le classement, l'emballage, le traitement et le marketing de fruits et de légumes. Ses principaux produits sont les pommes de terre, les oignons et les bleuets. L'entreprise vend ses bates fraîches ou pour une autre transformation, et 90 % de sa production est destinée à des marchés d'exportation aux États-Unis, au Royaume-Uni et en Islande.

Nova Agri Associates Limited, société constituée en 1985, appartient exclusivement à Dykeview Farms Limited. L'entreprise compte environ 2 000 acres cultivés dans la vallée de l'Annapolis, en Nouvelle-Écosse, ainsi que des installations de transformation à Canning et à Centreville.

Nova Agri Associates Limited, Nouvelle-Écosse

Situé près de Sydney, le Collège universitaire du Cap-Breton offre un agencement unique de programmes menant à l'obtention de baccalauréats, de diplômes et de certificats. Premier collège universitaire du pays, l'établissement est aussi devenu une plaque tournante pour la recherche-développement. Le centre de CFAO fait partie d'un groupe de centres de l'université qui cherchent à faciliter le transfert de l'innovation et du savoir à la collectivité afin de promouvoir la diversification économique et la commercialisation.

d'étudiants formés et concevoir d'autres projets en collaboration avec l'industrie.

Selon les conclusions d'une récente évaluation²⁵, les CBDC exercent une forte influence dans leur collectivité. Les prêts et le soutien accordés viennent appuyer la création et la préservation des emplois, et aident à diversifier l'économie. Le partenariat fonctionne bien et sert bien les besoins de développement des clients et de la collectivité. Les CBDC ont certains points forts dont l'implication dans la collectivité. Les alliances/réseaux entre les CBDC et les banques, les coopératives de crédit, d'autres organismes de développement économique régional, des municipalités, des établissements d'enseignement et d'autres, permettent d'étendre la portée des CBDC, créent un réseau de présentations et contribuent à harmoniser la planification à l'échelle locale.

AIDE AU DÉVELOPPEMENT DES PME DE L'ATLANTIQUE

Le PDE offre l'accès aux capitaux pour permettre aux PME de la région d'investir. Le programme a été conçu pour accroître le nombre de projets de démarrage, d'expansion et

de modernisation qui réussissent. Selon la récente évaluation du programme²⁶, les entreprises ayant bénéficié d'une aide dans le cadre du PDE ont créé quatre fois plus d'emplois que les autres entreprises. La croissance de la masse salariale était plus de six fois supérieure à celle des entreprises qui n'ont reçu aucune aide. Après trois ans, le taux de survie des entreprises soutenues par le PDE est plus du double de celui des entreprises qui n'ont pas reçu d'aide. On

trouvera ci-après quelques exemples précis du soutien apporté par l'APÉCA pour aider les PME de l'Atlantique à investir en accédant à des capitaux. La société Labrador West Quartzite Limited a été créée pour exploiter une carrière et une installation de transformation afin de produire du quartzite de haute qualité destiné à l'industrie du silicium métal. Selon les

Labrador West Quartzite Limited

« Comme la technologie évolue tous les jours, le centre doit être capable de s'adapter à l'époque. Ce projet d'agrandissement nous permet d'améliorer notre équipement, de former davantage d'étudiants, d'offrir un meilleur service à l'industrie et, en bout de ligne, de renforcer nos capacités. »

Brian McMahon, analyste des systèmes CAO pour le centre

communications CAO.

Se tenir au courant de l'évolution constante de la technologie est devenu un mode de vie pour le personnel du centre de CFAO du Collège universitaire du Cap-Breton. Créé en 1987, le centre apporte son aide aux entreprises de l'Est de la Nouvelle-Écosse dans des domaines comme la formation sur la programmation et le fonctionnement de la CAO, la robotique et les

Collège universitaire du Cap-Breton - Agrandissement du centre de CFAO²⁷

La région. La mise en œuvre du projet a permis de créer dix nouveaux emplois dans l'Ouest du Labrador. Le projet entrainera aussi des ventes à l'exportation de dix millions de dollars au cours de la prochaine période triennale et permettra de développer l'industrie du quartzite dans la région. Le coût total du projet a été évalué à 2 690 000 \$.

L'entreprise a investi 580 000 \$ et obtenu une

contribution remboursable de 490 000 \$ de l'Agence ainsi qu'un prêt de 1 620 000 \$ d'un établissement financier commercial. L'entreprise est située dans une collectivité isolée, où la participation de l'Agence était nécessaire pour obtenir celle des établissements de financement traditionnels.

Grâce au récent agrandissement du centre, le Collège universitaire est mieux à même d'évoluer en fonction des besoins de l'industrie. Il pourra désormais répondre en temps opportun à la demande de l'industrie, qui réclame des services de plus en plus pointus, comme l'alignement au laser de machines, la mise au point rapide de prototypes de produits et l'accès à une fraiseuse verticale à haute vitesse. Le centre pourra également augmenter le nombre

²⁷ CFAO - Conception et fabrication assistées par ordinateur.

²⁶ Évaluation du Programme de développement des entreprises de l'APÉCA, février 2003.

²⁵ Evaluation of the Community Futures Program (offert par les CBDC en Atlantique), Goss Gilroy Inc., mai 2003.



Capital de risque – ACF Capital Atlantique Inc.

ACF Capital Atlantique Inc. (ACF) est un partenariat de capital de risques composé de trois groupes : l'APÉCA, les quatre gouvernements provinciaux de la région de l'Atlantique et des prêteurs privés, en l'occurrence la Banque de Montréal, la Banque de Nouvelle-Écosse, la Banque Toronto-Dominion, la Banque royale, la Banque canadienne impériale de commerce, la Banque nationale du Canada, la Banque Hongkong du Canada et la Fédération des caisses populaires acadiennes liées. Chaque groupe a versé une contribution de dix millions de dollars, de façon à constituer un fonds de 30 millions de dollars. Ce fonds

n'a pas de lien de dépendance avec le gouvernement, et les décisions d'investissement sont fondées sur des analyses de rentabilité menées par du personnel indépendant d'ACF.

ACF, qui se concentre sur les entreprises d'innovation fortement axées sur le savoir, a joué un rôle de premier plan depuis sa création en 1997, et il fait de la région de l'Atlantique un intervenant clé en matière de capitaux de risque au pays.

Les capitaux de risque investis en Atlantique se sont élevés à 270 millions de dollars au cours de la période de 1998 à 2002, soit plus de trois fois les sommes investies à la

période quinquennale précédente. À titre d'investisseur connu et respecté sur le marché canadien des capitaux de risque, ACF a fait fructifier son capital plus de cinq fois, investissant dans des opérations de capital de risque dont la valeur a dépassé 100 millions de dollars jusqu'à maintenant.

Financement des entreprises dans les régions rurales – Association des corporations de développement communautaire de l'Atlantique

Pour améliorer l'accès aux capitaux dans les régions rurales et pour respecter l'engagement de l'APÉCA à l'égard du développement économique à long terme des

« Il s'agit d'une nouvelle orientation stratégique des CBDC. Nous pouvons maintenant répondre à la demande d'emprunt sans avoir à attendre de nouveaux crédits d'un exercice à l'autre. »

Basil Ryan, agent exécutif en chef du Fonds d'investissement du Canada atlantique dans les entreprises locales

Les CBDC exercent une forte influence dans les collectivités rurales : taux de satisfaction de 94 % de la clientèle et sauvegarde de 3,3 emplois par prêt moyen de 38 000 \$.

collectivités, l'Agence a participé à la création du Fonds d'investissement du Canada atlantique dans les entreprises locales afin d'offrir une source permanente de capitaux d'investissement aux PME en milieu rural. L'APÉCA a conclu un partenariat avec l'Association des corporations de développement communautaire (CBDC) de l'Atlantique, qui représente le réseau régional des 41 CBDC situées principalement dans les collectivités rurales de la région de l'Atlantique. L'octroi de 14,1 millions de dollars sur quatre ans a permis de répondre aux besoins en financement par emprunt des PME des régions rurales.

Les CBDC sont des sociétés autonomes sans but lucratif appuyées par l'APÉCA qui servent toutes les régions rurales du Canada atlantique. Elles contribuent à la création de petites entreprises ainsi qu'à l'expansion, à la modernisation et à la stabilisation des entreprises existantes. Les CBDC offrent des services financiers et techniques aux entrepreneurs de leur région respective.

L'aide technique prend souvent la forme de services de renseignements, de services d'orientation et de conseils sur les questions liées aux petites entreprises. L'aide

financière est habituellement consentie sous forme de prêt, mais peut comprendre des capitaux propres ou des garanties de prêt. Ces services financiers sont axés sur les entrepreneurs qui ont de la difficulté à obtenir des capitaux auprès des sources traditionnelles de financement. Ils ne font pas concurrence aux établissements financiers. Tous les prêts sont remboursables, et le montant maximum qui peut être investi dans une entreprise est de 125 000 \$. Les décisions d'investissement sont prises par un conseil d'administration local indépendant qui est sensible aux besoins de la collectivité.



L'information, des programmes et des services à partir d'Internet. L'APÉCA entend utiliser les technologies de l'information et des communications pour offrir un accès en ligne à son information et à ses services. Le lecteur trouvera de plus amples renseignements à ce sujet dans le site Web de l'APÉCA à l'adresse suivante :

<http://www.aeca-apeca.gc.ca/v/financial/index.shtml>

choisir un hôte et à résoudre les problèmes de connectivité. L'APÉCA et les CSC travaillent toujours en concertation avec le comité de travail du RSEA et concentrent leurs efforts sur la conception de produits d'information adaptés aux autochtones, l'achèvement de leur site Web régional et la formation supplémentaire pour mieux répondre aux besoins en information des entreprises autochtones.

MEILLEUR ACCÈS AUX CAPITAUX POUR LES PME DE L'ATLANTIQUE

Selon une analyse réalisée en 1999 par la Conférence Board du Canada, le PDE est la source d'environ 5 % de toute l'aide financière accordée aux entreprises de la région. Dans les secteurs admissibles au PDE, principalement la fabrication, le tourisme et les services aux entreprises, il

est estimé que le programme a fourni environ 15 % de tous les fonds accordés aux entreprises de l'Atlantique. Outre le PDE, l'APÉCA participe à des partenariats spécialement conçus pour faciliter l'accès aux capitaux des PME de la région de l'Atlantique.

« La participation de l'APÉCA à la création et au financement d'ACF a été indispensable. L'entreprise a pu ainsi obtenir la masse critique nécessaire (30 millions de dollars) pour créer un fonds viable. Sans cette aide, le fonds n'aurait tout simplement pas existé. »

Peter Forton, PDG d'ACF Capital Atlantique Inc.

sept à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador) ont reçu le matériel informatique, les logiciels et la formation pour être mieux en mesure d'accéder aux bases de données des CSC et du RSEA. Une autre collectivité de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (Hopdale ou Davis Inlet) se joindra au réseau lorsqu'on aura réussi à

En outre, l'APÉCA a mis en place le Réseau des services aux entreprises autochtones (RSEA). L'Agence et 42 collectivités et organismes autochtones de la région participent avec les CSC à l'élaboration et à la mise en oeuvre de cette mesure. Le comité de travail du RSEA se compose des représentants de l'APÉCA, des quatre provinces de la région. Actuellement, 41 collectivités ou organismes (16 au Nouveau-Brunswick, 15 en Nouvelle-Écosse, trois à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et

ACCÈS AUX CAPITAUX ET À L'INFORMATION

APERÇU

Accès aux capitaux

En raison de la taille de l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique, le secteur commercial de la région de l'Atlantique éprouve depuis longtemps des difficultés à obtenir des capitaux. Surmonter ces obstacles, en collaboration avec des partenaires du secteur privé et du secteur public, est l'une des priorités stratégiques de l'APFCA.

Selon le Conférence Board du Canada, le marché de la dette des PME est moins développé dans la région de l'Atlantique qu'au Canada en général. Il peut en effet y avoir moins de fournisseurs locaux, moins d'ampleur, moins de fournisseurs de services et moins de choix à l'échelle locale. Cette constatation est importante parce qu'elle peut dénoter un rôle additionnel pour les organismes gouvernementaux qui ont pour mandat de combler ce vide financier à l'échelle régionale¹⁷.

Les problèmes liés à l'accès aux capitaux sont encore plus marqués dans les régions rurales.

Le Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE) permet à des PME de concrétiser leurs projets d'investissement parce que les prêts non garantis mis à leur disposition servent en fait de capitaux propres, grâce auxquels les projets deviennent « intéressants pour les banques » et permettent d'obtenir des fonds d'autres sources (p. ex., des prêteurs, des financiers et des sociétés financières d'innovation)¹⁸.

Les problèmes liés à l'accès aux capitaux sont encore plus marqués dans les régions rurales. Comme 46 % des Canadiens dans la région de l'Atlantique vivent dans les régions rurales, comparativement à 20 % de l'ensemble des Canadiens, le PDE répond à leurs besoins spéciaux. Par exemple, quelque 65 % de l'aide du PDE a été accordée dans des régions rurales, à une époque où les cinq grandes banques à chartre ont fermé 16 % de leurs succursales en Atlantique,

Grâce au PDE, l'Agence a également pu s'employer à remédier aux problèmes d'accès aux capitaux des entreprises du savoir qui ont aussi besoin de capitaux en raison des délais d'exécution prolongés pour la mise au point de produits et qui doivent financer les coûts accessoires lorsqu'elles ne disposent pas de garanties additionnelles. Le PDE a un rôle important à jouer pour que ces entreprises réussissent à atteindre une taille et une capacité susceptibles d'intéresser le nouveau marché des capitaux de la région de l'Atlantique²².

Accès à l'information

Les Centres de services aux entreprises du Canada (CSEC) sont le moyen qu'a choisi l'APFCA pour offrir directement un meilleur accès à l'information. Il existe un CSEC dans chacune des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique, et chaque bureau offre gratuitement des services d'information complets aux entreprises. Le personnel averti et bilingue des CSEC répond aux questions des entreprises et leur propose diverses solutions pour les aider à prendre des décisions éclairées. Une récente évaluation a permis de constater un taux de satisfaction très élevé à l'égard des CSEC : 85 % des clients étaient satisfaits, soit très satisfait des services fournis²³. De plus, dans le cadre du projet Gouvernement en direct (Ged), le gouvernement du Canada prévoit de fournir de

¹⁷ Sources de financement par emprunt des PME de la région de l'Atlantique, 1999.

¹⁸ Évaluation du Programme de développement des entreprises de l'APFCA, APFCA, février 2003.

¹⁹ The Changing Banking Environment in Atlantic Canada and Effects on the Atlantic Market and the Economy in General, CFO Sustainability Group, août 2002.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Evaluation of the Atlantic Canada Business Service Centres, Goss Gilroy Inc., octobre 2002.

bateaux et d'entreprises de soutien. Le chiffre d'affaires annuel dépasse les 75 millions de dollars, dont 20 millions de dollars en exportations aux États-Unis. Plus de 50 projets ont été mis en œuvre par la NSBA, notamment des ateliers éducatifs, la participation à des foires commerciales internationales, la création de vidéos publicitaires, l'élaboration de normes professionnelles et de manuels, de même qu'une campagne publicitaire professionnelle axée sur le marché américain.

Cibler les nouveaux débouchés sur le marché des exportations - Équipe commerce I.-P.-É.

Équipe commerce I.-P.-É. est un partenariat de ministères fédéraux et provinciaux de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard qui s'occupe de l'expansion du commerce extérieur. L'APÉCA dirige cette initiative du côté fédéral. L'équipe a déployé de nombreux efforts pour cibler de nouveaux débouchés sur les marchés extérieurs. En octobre 2000, elle a notamment organisé, en collaboration avec le consulat du

Canada à Atlanta, un séminaire sur le commerce axé sur les débouchés dans les marchés extérieurs du Sud-Est des États-Unis.

En collaboration avec le consulat, Équipe commerce I.-P.-É. a ciblé les secteurs des produits agroalimentaires et des fruits de mer, des

produits de construction, des produits de consommation, des articles cadeaux et des technologies de l'information, parce qu'elle les considère comme les plus prometteurs pour les entreprises de la province. Le séminaire a réuni des délégués commerciaux du consulat et des acheteurs de la région d'Atlanta prêts à rencontrer, en entrevue individuelle, des entreprises de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard.

« Si nous nous préoccupons de la qualité, des normes et de l'aide dont ont besoin les entreprises de ce secteur, les constructeurs de bateaux de la Nouvelle-Écosse pourront servir ce marché pendant des années. »

Tim Edwards, directeur exécutif de la Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association

Plus de 70 représentants d'entreprises et du gouvernement ont participé à l'événement. À l'évaluation, les participants ont dit que l'activité était excellente, bien organisée et rentable. Une mission commerciale d'ÉCA a ensuite eu lieu à Atlanta en mai 2001, renforçant ainsi la présence de la région de l'Atlantique sur ce marché en expansion.

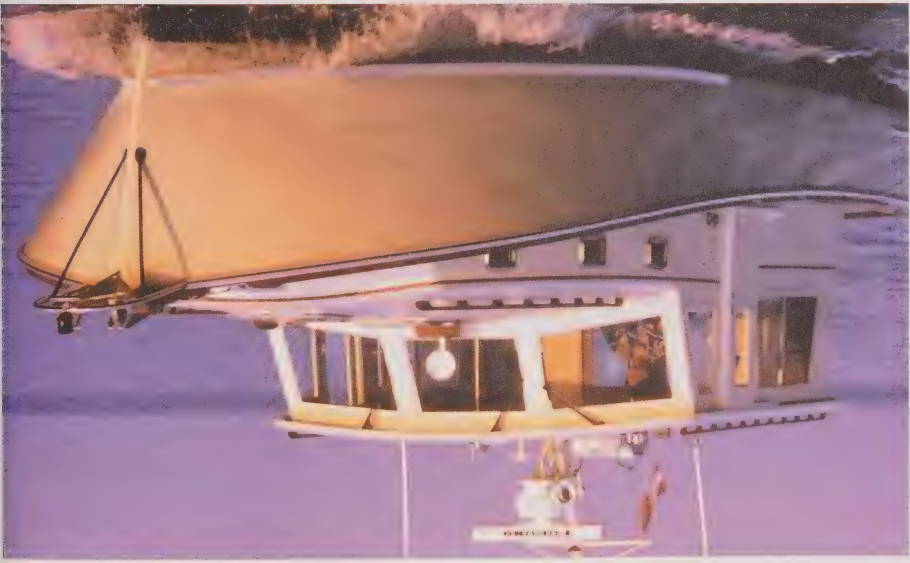
Objectif marketing - Valley Machine Works Ltd., Nouveau-Brunswick

Située à Nackawic, au Nouveau-Brunswick, la société Valley Machine Works est une entreprise de taille moyenne qui se spécialise dans la fabrication d'outillage complexe pour les scieries et d'autres installations de transformation du bois. Grâce à l'aide qu'elle a reçue de l'APÉCA dans le cadre du Programme de développement des entreprises et du Partenariat pour le commerce et l'investissement au Canada atlantique, Valley Machine Works a amélioré ses activités de marketing et les a axées sur les marchés d'exportation.

« Les investissements de l'APÉCA nous ont aidés à fonder solidement notre croissance et notre expansion. »

M. Woodford, président de Valley Machine Works (Nouveau-Brunswick)

Unis, Valley Machine Works a également formé un partenariat avec USNR, fabricant américain d'outillage et de systèmes de commande pour l'industrie de la transformation du bois. Cette alliance permet à Valley Machine Works d'assurer l'entretien de l'outillage au nom de USNR.



**Séminaire « Horizon le monde » -
Sydney (Cap-Breton)**

La chambre de commerce de la région de Sydney est un
organisme sans but lucratif qui se préoccupe du bien-être

économique, social et
éducatif de ses citoyens.
Elle compte environ
425 membres, et elle est
dirigée par un conseil
d'administration et un
comité exécutif.

En collaboration avec
l'APBCA, la chambre de
commerce a parrainé un
séminaire de trois jours

intitulé *Horizon le monde*. Ce séminaire portait sur la
sensibilisation au commerce et le perfectionnement des
compétences, le marketing à l'étranger et le financement
commercial, de même que la logistique commerciale. *Horizon
le monde* devait permettre aux entreprises et aux particuliers
d'acquiescer les compétences nécessaires pour soutenir la
concurrence sur les marchés étrangers.

Au total, six séances ont eu lieu et ont attiré
50 participants.

L'Association représente maintenant les deux tiers du
secteur : elle compte 56 sociétés membres –
26 constructeurs de bateaux et 30 entreprises de soutien,
et quelque 1 500 employés spécialisés qui travaillent
actuellement au service d'ateliers de construction de

plaisance constituées sur mesure pour les marchés
d'exportation. Le plan comprend diverses mesures :
perfectionnement des compétences, marketing et
promotion, production soumise à un contrôle de la
qualité, communications et coopération, recherche-
développement et génie et, enfin, études de marché.
L'Association (NSBA) pour
élaborer et mettre en œuvre
un plan stratégique
quinquennal qui vise à
revitaliser le secteur de la
construction de bateaux. Le
partenariat vise à diversifier
ce secteur pour qu'il soit en
mesure de produire des
bateaux de pêche
commerciale aussi bien que
des embarcations de

**« Sur les marchés étrangers actuels,
posséder les compétences qui
permettront de vendre partout dans
le monde n'est pas seulement un
atout, mais une obligation. »**

John Mash, président de la chambre de commerce
de la région de Sydney

**Diversification grâce au commerce -
Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association**

L'APBCA s'est associée au gouvernement de la
Nouvelle-Écosse et la Nova Scotia Boatbuilders

L'étude révèle que le Canada compte huit des villes les plus concurrentielles du monde sur le plan des coûts, dont Halifax et Moncton. Elle s'est donc révélée un outil précieux pour attirer des investissements au Canada et dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. L'étude a beaucoup contribué à faire connaître la région aux investisseurs américains et européens, et elle a montré que l'Atlantique était un endroit rentable pour le commerce. Elle a en outre aidé les agents fédéraux et provinciaux à acquérir les compétences nécessaires pour mieux intervenir auprès d'investisseurs potentiels et fournir des occasions de renforcer les rapports stratégiques avec les Partenaires pour l'investissement au Canada, les provinces de l'Atlantique et les municipalités.

Élargissement du bassin d'exportateurs

Comme moins de 3 % des PME de la région de l'Atlantique exportent actuellement, il est indispensable, pour la croissance des revenus et des emplois dans la région, que les entreprises soient plus nombreuses à faire leur place sur les marchés étrangers en tant qu'exportatrices de biens et de services. L'Agence accorde donc une priorité particulière à la création d'un bassin d'entreprises exportatrices en Atlantique. À cette fin, elle a adopté des mesures précises afin de développer l'expérience des entreprises et d'engendrer la réussite. Voici le profil de cinq initiatives relatives à l'exportation auxquelles participent l'APÉCA et ses partenaires commerciaux.

Réseaux d'entreprises pour l'expansion du commerce - Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador

L'initiative des réseaux d'entreprises de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador a favorisé la création de réseaux d'entreprises permettant aux PME de la province de mettre en commun

« En participant à la séance de formation, j'ai acquis une connaissance approfondie de l'étude, de la méthodologie et de la façon d'appliquer les résultats dans nos activités de développement économique. Nous avons beaucoup utilisé le rapport et constaté qu'il s'agissait d'un outil précieux pour faire valoir le Grand Halifax comme marché pour les investissements étrangers. Nous avons beaucoup apprécié les projets de l'APÉCA en ce qui concerne la brochure de KPMG sur la région de l'Atlantique et la séance de formation. »

Ruth Blades, chercheuse au Greater Halifax Partnership

leurs ressources afin d'exploiter des possibilités commerciales, lorsque les besoins en marketing, en production ou en distribution dépassent les capacités des entreprises individuelles, grâce à cette mesure, les PME ont pu explorer certains débouchés sur les marchés intérieurs et étrangers, mettre au point et commercialiser de nouvelles technologies et renforcer leurs capacités de gestion, de marketing et de production. Les réseaux admissibles devaient compter au moins trois participants dotés des compétences nécessaires en gestion, d'un sens de l'engagement, de la capacité technique et des ressources financières pour participer à leur essor commercial. Quatorze réseaux ont reçu de l'aide l'APÉCA, allant d'entreprises spécialisées dans le bois de sciage à valeur ajoutée à des mytilculteurs (culture de moules bleues sur des cordes en suspension), en passant par des entreprises de technologie de l'information.

Atlantic Canada International Group Inc. est l'un de ces réseaux. Il regroupe les entreprises suivantes : Baird Enterprise Advancement and Education Services, Lewis Engineering et Télécom Alliant. Cette entité est axée sur les exportations en Amérique centrale en particulier, plus précisément au Honduras, un marché où les entreprises offrent des services combinés. Les membres du réseau ont investi du temps et de l'argent, et ils ont fait des voyages d'information commerciale au Honduras et à Washington (D.C.). Pour sa part, l'Agence canadienne de développement international (ACDI) examine les débouchés commerciaux potentiels. Le réseau a conclu avec l'ACDI un contrat de 400 000 \$ pour la réalisation d'une étude de faisabilité sur la construction d'une installation qui convertirait en électricité les déchets des terres à bois et des fermes.

électronique dans les secteurs de l'énergie et de la biotechnologie, de même qu'une brochure de KPMG sur la région de l'Atlantique. Un document de référence pour les décideurs et les experts en sélection d'emplacement a également été créé et distribué par l'intermédiaire du marketing direct ciblé. Un site Web d'investissement au Canada atlantique a également été créé. Il se trouve à www.apeca.gc.ca/investir.

Analyse comparative en matière d'investissements – Étude de KPMG « Choix concurrentiels »

L'étude *Choix concurrentiels* de KPMG est une étude biennale complète qui compare les coûts des entreprises dans les collectivités de plus de 100 000 habitants en Autriche, en France, en Italie, en Allemagne, aux Pays-Bas, au Royaume-Uni, au Canada, aux États-Unis et au Japon. L'Agence a parrainé les études de 1999 et de 2001 afin que les collectivités de la région de l'Atlantique en fassent partie. Au total, 86 villes ont été décrites dans le rapport de 2001, Moncton et Halifax étant les seules villes de l'Atlantique à faire partie du groupe.

Dans une étude ultérieure sur le modèle de coûts¹⁶, six autres collectivités de la région de l'Atlantique ont été incluses dans une liste élargie de 115 villes en 2001. Il s'agit de Charlottetown, de Fredricton, de St. John's, de Saint John, de Sydney et de Truro. Les villes de la région de l'Atlantique se sont classées aux premiers rangs en ce qui concerne la compétitivité générale des coûts au Canada et à l'étranger.

En parrainant ces études, l'APÉCA a eu accès aux détails de l'étude et au modèle correspondant des coûts d'investissement. Elle a en outre organisé une séance interactive d'information et de formation sur l'utilisation du modèle de coûts à l'intention des agents d'investissement provinciaux et fédéraux, de même que des huit municipalités qui faisaient partie de l'étude de KPMG.

L'APÉCA, en collaboration avec KPMG, a produit une brochure publicitaire sur la région de l'Atlantique au début de 2002 afin de promouvoir les avantages de la région sur le plan des coûts. La brochure a largement été diffusée à des intervenants clés du domaine des investissements au Canada et à l'étranger, de même que dans certains consulats du Canada aux États-Unis et en Europe. Elle a également servi d'outil promotionnel au cours des missions de commerce et d'investissement d'ÉCA.

développement économique et des dirigeants d'entreprise participantes avaient un pouvoir de décision sur une vaste gamme de questions liées à la réinstallation des entreprises et représentant des secteurs clés comme les technologies de l'information et des communications, la biotechnologie, l'électronique grand public et la fabrication de pointe.

Chacun des représentants de la région de l'Atlantique a participé à diverses activités de création de réseaux et à environ 15 rencontres officielles avec des dirigeants d'entreprise qui avaient indiqué souhaiter prendre l'expansion. Les représentants du comité assurent le suivi permanent des projets éventuels et des possibilités d'investissement.

Rencontre des conseillers en investissement du ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Commerce international aux États-Unis,

septembre 2002

Le CCICA a organisé, en même temps que la 34^e conférence annuelle de l'Economic Development Association of Canada, une rencontre à Charlottetown, à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, avec 14 conseillers en investissement du ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Commerce international aux États-Unis. La rencontre a permis de mieux faire connaître l'Atlantique comme marché de l'investissement et de renseigner les conseillers sur les efforts déployés par la région pour attirer des investissements. Trois entreprises américaines établies en Atlantique (Urban Machinery, Honeywell et Sepracor) ont présenté des témoignages sur les investissements étrangers directs; l'APÉCA et les quatre provinces de l'Atlantique ont également présenté des exposés.

Promotion des investissements dans les médias

En 2001-2002, l'APÉCA a mené une campagne dans les médias et placé des annonces sur les investissements dans des revues américaines et européennes à caractère sectoriel ou destinées aux dépositaires d'emplacements. La série publicitaire a été produite sous le thème suivant : « *Le Canada atlantique - Un des meilleurs endroits pour faire du commerce* ». On a également produit, pour les distributeurs aux investisseurs et aux personnes-ressources importantes, des cartes CD-ROM pour le commerce



les produits alimentaires à valeur ajoutée. Les marchés ciblés sont les suivants : les États-Unis, l'Europe de l'Ouest, l'Amérique latine, les Antilles et le Japon.

se compose de représentants de l'APÉCA, des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique, d'Industrie Canada et du programme Partenaires pour l'investissement au Canada.

Il n'est pas facile d'attirer des investissements étrangers

directs en Atlantique, notamment en raison de la taille de la région par rapport à celle de ses concurrents. La mise en commun des ressources financières et humaines permet à la région de donner une plus grande portée à ses activités de sensibilisation et de promotion, comme les conférences, la publicité, les missions d'investissement et les visites d'investisseurs potentiels.

La création de ce comité a donné lieu au lancement d'initiatives stratégiques régionales en matière d'investissement. En voici quelques-unes :

2002 Relocation Summit, Washington (D.C.) : Des représentants du CCICA ont participé à ce sommet, qui réunissait des fournisseurs de solutions en

Plus de 80 projets auxquels ont participé quelque

1 300 entreprises ont été approuvées entre les exercices 1998-1999 et 2002-2003. L'aide financière a totalisé 4,9 millions de dollars. Selon le tout dernier sondage¹⁵, 21 % des entreprises ont commencé à exporter sur de nouveaux marchés, 30 % ont accru leur volume d'exportations sur les marchés actuels, et 48 % ont ciblé d'éventuels nouveaux marchés.

Priorité aux investissements :

Comité de coordination des investissements au Canada atlantique

Le Comité de coordination des investissements au Canada atlantique (CCICA) a été créé au début de 2000 pour tirer profit des avantages que procurent une meilleure collaboration et une coordination plus étroite des activités d'investissement dans la région de l'Atlantique. Le comité

« Depuis notre participation à Americana 2001 à Montréal, comme membre d'une délégation parrainée par le PDE, Agri Plas Systems a été inondé de manifestations d'intérêt de la part de partenaires commerciaux potentiels de partout dans le monde, notamment de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, de la Californie et de la Nouvelle-Zélande. »

Austin Boyd, président
d'Agri Plas Systems 2001, Stratford (Île-du-Prince-Édouard)

**Collaboration avec les partenaires -
Entente de COOPÉRATION entre le Canada et les
provinces de l'Atlantique sur la promotion du
commerce extérieur**

L'entente de COOPÉRATION entre le Canada et les provinces de l'Atlantique sur la promotion du commerce extérieur (EPCE) est le résultat de la collaboration entre le gouvernement fédéral et les gouvernements des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique. Les partenaires de cette entente sont les suivants : l'APÉCA, le ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Commerce international, Industrie Canada, Entreprises Nouveau-Brunswick, Nova Scotia Business Inc., PEI Business Development Inc. et le ministère de l'Industrie, du Commerce et du Développement rural de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador. L'APÉCA finance la part fédérale de l'entente, soit 70 %, et les provinces financent la part restante de 30 %.

Conclue à l'initiation de l'APÉCA, l'EPCE a d'abord été signée en 1994 et a été dotée d'un budget de deux millions de dollars sur trois ans. Elle a depuis été prolongée à deux reprises — une fois en 1997, avec une somme additionnelle de trois millions de dollars, et une autre fois en 2000, avec un budget de huit millions de dollars. L'entente doit prendre fin en avril 2004. L'EPCE, qui existe maintenant depuis neuf ans, a permis de financer des projets ayant pour but de faire connaître aux entreprises de la région de l'Atlantique le potentiel que leur offrent les exportations pour prendre de l'expansion et accroître leur chiffre d'affaires, ainsi que d'aider des exportateurs existants à trouver de nouveaux marchés et à accroître leurs ventes sur des marchés déjà conquis. Ces objectifs ont été atteints grâce à quatre éléments stratégiques : formation et sensibilisation; planification et recherche; information et renseignements sur le marché et activités de promotion du commerce extérieur.

Les secteurs prioritaires comprennent les produits de construction, les entreprises environnementales, les technologies de l'information et des communications, les sciences de la vie, l'industrie océanique, les plastiques et

La formule d'équipe Canada Atlantique a été conçue pour stimuler le commerce et les investissements entre des entreprises de la région de l'Atlantique et des marchés étrangers stratégiques. Depuis sa création en 1999, le programme d'ÉCA a ciblé des marchés stratégiques le long de la côte Est des États-Unis. En tout, sept missions ont été organisées jusqu'à maintenant, dont deux qui ont été dirigées par le premier ministre. Les marchés visités comprennent la Nouvelle-Angleterre, l'Atlantia et New York.

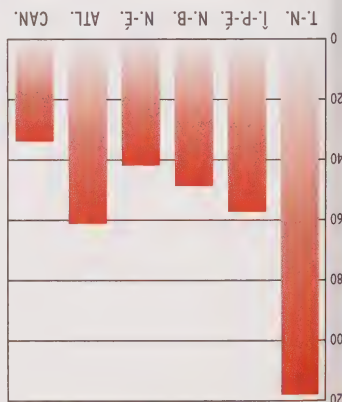
Équipe Canada Atlantique est le fruit des efforts concertés de l'APÉCA, des quatre gouvernements provinciaux, du ministre fédéral des Affaires étrangères et du Commerce international, d'Industrie Canada, d'Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada et d'Équipe Canada (lorsque le premier ministre participe aux missions). Un secrétaire d'ÉCA, qui se trouve à

l'APÉCA, se charge de coordonner et d'organiser les missions en consultation avec le comité organisationnel, auquel siègent tous les partenaires. L'APÉCA assure environ 75 % du financement des missions dans le cadre du PDE (non commercial); les quatre gouvernements provinciaux et les sociétés participantes assurent les 25 % restants. Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada verse une contribution modeste pour une activité particulière.

Depuis le lancement du programme d'ÉCA en 1999, un total de sept missions commerciales ont été organisées à Atlantia, à New York et en Nouvelle-Angleterre. Les missions ont permis à plus de 250 entreprises du Canada atlantique de rencontrer plus de 1 900 acheteurs américains, agents et propriétaires d'entreprises des quatre coins des États-Unis. Elles ont en outre contribué à générer 20 millions de dollars en ventes confirmées et plus de 75 millions de dollars en ventes prévues¹⁴.



Figure 14
Croissance de l'exportation
Atlantique et Canada, 1997-2002



Source : Industrie Canada / Stratégis

Comme il fallait s'attendre, le pétrole et le gaz, de même que les dérivés raffinés du pétrole, représentaient la part la plus importante de l'augmentation pendant la période. Toutefois, un large éventail d'autres produits ont aussi affiché des hausses très considérables qui se sont chiffrées à 2,94 milliards de dollars en ventes à l'exportation, comme le montre la figure 15.

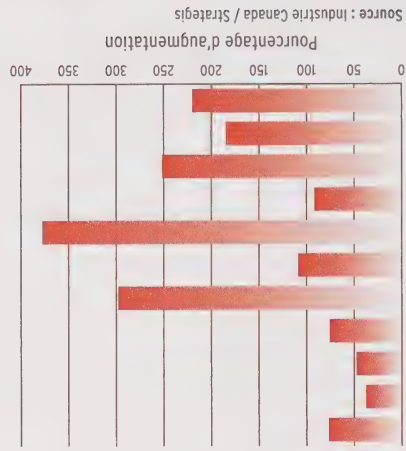
par KPMG.

L'APÉCA a joué un important rôle de leadership et de coordination à l'appui des priorités stratégiques Commerce et Investissements. Entre 1998 et 2003, l'APÉCA a contribué à la création de quatre initiatives importantes dans la région : Équipe Canada Atlantique; le renouvellement de l'Entente de COOPÉRATION sur la promotion du commerce extérieur (EPEC), conclue entre le Canada et les provinces de l'Atlantique et dotée d'un budget de 8 millions de dollars; la création du Comité de coordination des investissements du Canada atlantique, de même que l'étude intitulée *Choix concurrentiels*, réalisée

Concertation - Missions d'Équipe Canada Atlantique pour le commerce et l'investissement

Les missions d'Équipe Canada Atlantique (ECA) pour le commerce et l'investissement font partie d'une initiative régionale dirigée par l'APÉCA, dans le cadre du Partenariat pour le commerce et l'investissement au Canada atlantique (PCCA). Ces missions sont dirigées soit par le premier ministre et les quatre premiers ministres des provinces de l'Atlantique, soit par le ministre d'État à l'APÉCA et des ministres provinciaux. Généralement, les missions comprennent jusqu'à 60 des entreprises exportatrices les plus prometteuses de la région, et divers secteurs d'activité y sont représentés.

Figure 15
Croissance des exportations



Source : Industrie Canada / Stratégis

Selon Statistique Canada, la région de l'Atlantique comptait 1 980 exportateurs en 2001, une hausse de 22 % comparativement aux 1 618 exportateurs de 1993.

Au cours des cinq dernières années, l'Agence a aidé plus de 400 entreprises à se lancer dans l'exportation.

Ces dernières années, la vigueur de l'économie, tant régionale que nationale, ainsi que les ententes de libéralisation du commerce ont stimulé la croissance des exportations dans le milieu des affaires en Atlantique. Comme moins de 3 % des PME de la région exportent leurs produits et services, il était tout indiqué pour l'APÉCA de prendre des mesures pour hausser le niveau des exportations. Pour accroître le nombre de PME exportatrices, il fallait une stratégie générale axée sur le renforcement des capacités d'exportation ainsi que sur la recherche et l'exploitation du potentiel commercial et sectoriel.

L'Agence a ajouté un volet « investissements » à ses priorités stratégiques pour accroître le nombre d'investissements étrangers dans l'économie de la région. Il fallait une approche qui vaille pour toutes les provinces de l'Atlantique afin que les partenaires régionaux du commerce et de l'investissement collaborent avec efficacité et efficience à l'atteinte des objectifs communs.

La stratégie paraatlantique de promotion du commerce et des investissements de l'APÉCA est fondée sur quatre outils de développement économique : le Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE); le Programme de COOPÉRATION; l'Entente sur la promotion du commerce extérieur (EPCE); et le Partenariat pour le commerce et l'investissement au Canada atlantique (PCICA). L'APÉCA et ses partenaires allient stratégiquement ces instruments pour accroître le volume total des exportations de la région; pour ce faire, ils sensibilisent les PME au potentiel de l'exportation comme stratégie de croissance; ils préconisent et appuient le perfectionnement des compétences en matière d'exportation des entreprises exportatrices potentielles et existantes et des conseillers commerciaux; ils donnent aux PME, aux associations industrielles et aux associations d'entreprises un meilleur accès à un soutien financier; et ils s'emploient à mieux connaître les besoins à combler pour développer les exportations, de même que la capacité d'exportation des

divers secteurs dans lesquels œuvrent les entreprises exportatrices de la région.

Au cours des cinq dernières années, l'Agence a aidé plus de 400 entreprises à se lancer dans l'exportation. Selon la dernière évaluation du PDE, les nouveaux exportateurs qui ont obtenu de l'aide dans le cadre de ce programme remportent un succès considérable : les deux tiers d'entre eux ont accédé aux marchés étrangers et l'ont fait d'importantes augmentations de leur volume d'exportation et de leurs effectifs. En outre, les sondages de suivi montrent que près de 80 % de tous les clients du PDE qui sont devenus de nouveaux exportateurs en 1998 et en 1999 exportent toujours avec succès¹². Par comparaison, environ la moitié des nouveaux exportateurs canadiens continuent à exporter après trois ou quatre ans¹³.

Dans sa stratégie de promotion des investissements de l'Atlantique, l'APÉCA concentre ses efforts dans quatre domaines stratégiques : effectuer et appuyer des travaux de recherche d'investissements qui soient plus pertinents pour la région; améliorer la qualité de la gestion de l'information et la diffusion de cette dernière aux principaux intervenants du domaine des investissements; mieux faire connaître la région et la présenter aux publics cibles comme un marché rentable pour les affaires et établir des partenariats avec d'autres ministères fédéraux, les gouvernements provinciaux et le secteur privé pour attirer et multiplier les investissements.

LE DÉFI DE LA CONCURRENCE - DES STRATÉGIES DE PROMOTION DU COMMERCE ET DES INVESTISSEMENTS

Les exportations de biens primaires et de produits manufacturés sont passées de 11,6 milliards de dollars en 1997 à 19,7 milliards de dollars en 2002, un gain de 70 % pendant la période quinquennale. Les exportations de produits de bases sont à la hausse et représentent maintenant 30 % du PIB de la région, alors qu'elles en représentaient 23 % en 1997. Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador a enregistré les gains les plus importants au titre des exportations, soit une hausse de 118 %, ce qui correspond à une somme supplémentaire de près de 3 milliards de dollars pendant la période visée par le présent rapport (voir la figure 14).

¹² Examen des nouveaux exportateurs : Programme de développement des entreprises, APÉCA, sondage 2002.

¹³ Statistique Canada - Profil des exportateurs canadiens 1993-1997, août 2000.



« Les changements apportés par l'East Coast Trail Association au paysage d'Avalon, ainsi qu'à son accessibilité pour les résidents et les visiteurs, sont à mes yeux l'amélioration la plus percutante de la "qualité de vie" dont j'ai été témoin. »

Judith Adler, département de sociologie,
Université Memorial de Terre-Neuve

Les travaux effectués sur le sentier comprennent la construction de ponts sur de petits ruisseaux, l'aménagement de trottoirs de bois et d'escaliers et l'installation de pierres taillées à certains emplacements. L'association a également conçu et placé des panneaux d'affichage et des installations marquant le début du sentier.

Les travaux effectués sur ce tronçon du sentier ont coûté 1,6 millions de dollars. De ce montant, l'APÉCA et le gouvernement provincial ont fourni 1,1 millions de dollars dans le cadre de la composante Développement économique des Mesures d'adaptation et de restructuration des pêches canadiennes, une entente fédérale-provinciale de partage des coûts.

IMPORTANCE DE LA NATURE

Le tourisme naturel ouvre de nombreux horizons à l'industrie touristique de l'Atlantique. Les statistiques provinciales du tourisme montrent que 85 % de tous les voyages effectués dans cette région comportent un volet naturel. Conscient de l'importance des produits naturels de la région, l'APFCA a investi dans des expériences qui peuvent : i) attirer de nouveaux visiteurs dans la région; ii) prolonger la durée de leur séjour; iii) les inciter à dépenser davantage; iv) accroître leur satisfaction à l'égard des installations touristiques de la région.

L'aménagement de l'île Madame au Cap-Breton et du sentier de la Côte-Est à Terre-Neuve constituent deux exemples des investissements stratégiques faits par l'APFCA dans le tourisme naturel.

Aménagement du sentier écologique du Cap-Auget par la Development of Isle Madame Association Inc., l'île Madame, Cap-Breton

En février 1995 voyait le jour la Development of Isle Madame Association (DIMA). La DIMA est le fruit d'un exercice de planification stratégique lancé au moment de l'effondrement de la pêche du poisson de fond au début des années 1990. Cette crise avait affecté 350 emplois directs et 1 000 emplois indirects, sur une population active de 1 800 personnes. La DIMA est une entreprise limitée sans but lucratif appartenant à la collectivité. Sous la direction de son conseil d'administration, l'association s'est donné pour mission de faciliter l'atteinte des buts de la collectivité ainsi que le respect de ses priorités. La DIMA s'est révélée utile pour sensibiliser la région de l'île Madame à l'écotourisme, et c'est cette vision qui a contribué à faire du sentier du Cap-Auget l'un des sentiers de randonnée les plus pittoresques et les plus fréquentés du Cap-Breton.

« L'aménagement du sentier du Cap-Auget offre aux visiteurs une raison de plus de s'arrêter et de savourer les attraits de l'île Madame. »

Brenda Martell, directrice intermédiaire de la Development of Isle Madame Association (DIMA)

Sentier de la Côte-Est, presque l'île Avalon, Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador

Le sentier du Cap-Auget s'élève jusqu'à 150 pieds, le long de plages et de côtes rocheuses. Depuis longtemps, on trouve le long des grandes anses d'importants aménagements de roches servant de lignes délimitant les terrains ou de fondations. On y trouve les vestiges d'établissements académiques abandonnés qui ont été habités pendant des périodes allant jusqu'à 200 ans. On y trouve également des épaves et on peut y apercevoir des baleines.

La côte Est de la presque l'île Avalon de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador est un remarquable mélange d'histoire, de nature et de paysages, et l'endroit idéal pour les férus de randonnée. L'East Coast Trail Association a collaboré avec l'APFCA, DRHC et le gouvernement provincial pour créer le sentier de la Côte-Est, reliant une grande partie de l'Est de la presque l'île Avalon à un réseau de sentiers de randonnée.

L'association a terminée la partie principale du sentier, un tronçon de 220 kilomètres de tout premier ordre, reliant St. John's à la petite localité de Cappahayden, sur la côte Sud de la province. Le sentier relie deux lieux historiques nationaux, 22 localités, deux parcs provinciaux ainsi que des réserves écologiques et des sites patrimoniaux. Il a suscité l'attention des foratistes et des médias étrangers. L'East Coast Trail Association dépend de ses membres et apporte au projet de très nombreux efforts bénévoles. Elle prévoit de prolonger le sentier, surtout dans le secteur situé au nord de St. John's.

En 2002, le festival celte organisé par le collège a reçu le prix provincial Attraction Canada, dans les catégories du meilleur événement culturel et des attractions d'envergure nationale ou internationale. Le collège a pu étendre sa série de concerts d'été à cinq soirées par semaine en 2002, et le nombre de spectateurs a augmenté de 19 % par rapport à l'année précédente. Les recettes des concerts se sont accrues de 32 %, et les ventes de la boutique de cadeaux, meilleures événements de 2003 de l'American Bus Association.

Aménagement du site archéologique Colony of Avalon, Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador

La Colony of Avalon Foundation a été constituée en 1995 à titre d'organisme communautaire sans but lucratif chargé d'étudier, de préserver et d'aménager les vestiges archéologiques de l'ancienne colonie d'Avalon de Lord Baltimore, ainsi que d'autres vestiges des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles à Ferryland, le long de la côte Sud de l'île de Terre-Neuve. La fondation compte plus de 200 membres. Depuis 1996, l'APÉCA a fourni environ trois millions de dollars pour l'aménagement de ce site.

« L'APÉCA nous a beaucoup aidés à faire connaître le collège, tant auprès des étudiants qu'auprès des touristes, ce qui a nettement porté fruit. »
 Scott MacAulay, directeur du College of Piping and Celtic Performing Arts of Canada

Les fouilles ont permis d'exhumer les vestiges de huit constructions et révélé l'existence de vastes ouvrages défensifs et de plus d'un million d'objets façonnés. Voici quelques-unes des constructions du XVII^e siècle ainsi mises au jour : une forge (construite par les premiers colons à l'été de 1622), un entrepôt remonçant aux premières années de la colonie, deux logements du milieu du siècle et un complexe grange-étable brûlé par les Français en 1696.

Les efforts déployés par la fondation pour transformer la colonie d'Avalon en une attraction patrimoniale de calibre mondial, importante à l'échelle provinciale, nationale et mondiale, ont dépassé les attentes. Les visites touristiques au site sont passées de moins de 2 000 en 1992 à plus de 22 000 en 2001. Les dépenses engagées par les touristes sur place sont évaluées à 1,8 million de dollars. Au nombre des autres retombées économiques associées au site, signalons une contribution de 1,75 million de dollars au PIB provincial et la création de quelque 50 années-personnes d'emploi. Les avantages augmenteront au fil des découvertes archéologiques et de l'aménagement d'autres attractions.

Les investissements faits par l'APÉCA dans le tourisme culturel ont eu les effets suivants :

- contribuer à prolonger le séjour des visiteurs dans la région de l'Atlantique;
- accroître le nombre d'expériences culturelles et patrimoniales offertes dans des secteurs géographiques stratégiques;
- favoriser le développement de collectivités répondant aux normes du tourisme durable en Atlantique.

Le Collège of Piping and Celtic Performing Arts of Canada, à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, et le site archéologique Colony of Avalon, à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, illustrent l'approche stratégique adoptée par l'APÉCA pour le tourisme culturel et patrimonial en Atlantique.

College of Piping and Celtic Performing Arts of Canada, Summerside (Île-du-Prince-Édouard)

Situé à Summerside (Île-du-Prince-Édouard), le Collège of Piping and Celtic Performing Arts of Canada a été fondé en 1990. Comme plus de 70 % des habitants de l'île sont de descendance écossaise ou irlandaise, il semblait pertinent de créer le collège dans cette province. Sa mission consiste à fournir des programmes éducatifs de qualité sur les arts d'interprétation celtiques. C'est le seul établissement du genre en Amérique du Nord, et il est affilié au Collège of Piping de Glasgow, en Écosse.

L'établissement comprend un amphithéâtre extérieur, une bibliothèque (double d'un centre de documentation), des studios de danse à miroirs, une salle d'entraînement, des salles de classes, des pièces d'entraînement insoucrites et une boutique de cadeaux. Sa population étudiante est passée d'à peine 30 en 1990 à plus de 300. En plus de produire des artistes d'interprétation celtique, le collège contribue largement à une production touristique culturelle de qualité et, par conséquent, aux retombées économiques du tourisme dans la province. À eux seuls, les concerts ont attiré vers l'île, en 2001, plus de 7 800 visiteurs en quête d'expériences culturelles. L'APÉCA a beaucoup investi dans ce projet en établissant un plan triennal de marketing pour le collège, en montant des expositions d'interprétation et en aménageant le domaine environnant afin de le rendre plus attrayant pour les touristes. Au nombre des autres bailleurs de fonds, citons la ville de Summerside, le ministère provincial du Développement et la R. Howard Webster Foundation.

La hausse du nombre d'établissements classés (de 415 en 1991 à 3 063 en 2002) a nettement accru la capacité de l'industrie touristique de croître, de prospérer et de rester concurrentielle à l'échelle nationale et mondiale.

Dans l'ensemble, les investissements effectués par l'APFCA dans ce domaine ont eu les effets suivants :

- accroître le nombre d'établissements d'hébergement touristique durant toute l'année dans les provinces de l'Atlantique;
- contribuer à prolonger la durée des séjours;
- accroître le nombre d'établissements d'hébergement dans les zones géographiques stratégiques;
- fournir l'accès au marché des petits congrès;
- contribuer à développer de collectives touristiques durables en Atlantique.

Voici les profils de deux projets illustrant la démarche stratégique adoptée par l'Agence pour développer l'hébergement dans la région.

Quaco Inn, St. Martins (Nouveau-Brunswick)

L'auberge Quaco Inn de St. Martins a accueilli des milliers de visiteurs depuis le début des années 80. Depuis 1993, l'APFCA collabore avec les propriétaires de l'auberge Quaco pour élaborer et améliorer cet établissement dont la construction remonte à plus d'un siècle. En 1999, l'Agence a aidé les propriétaires Rudy et Kather Miller-Zinn à ajouter un cachet gothique à l'auberge, ce qui leur a permis de conserver leur statut d'établissement à quatre étoiles en vertu du nouveau système de classement de la province ainsi que de répondre à la demande croissante.

Rosewood Cottages, Hubbards (Nouvelle-Écosse)

Rosewood Cottages, dont Phyllis Hind Holdings Ltd. est le propriétaire et l'exploitant, est une propriété riveraine comprenant 1,25 acre de terrain dans la zone de villégiature de Hubbards (Nouvelle-Écosse).

Les investissements faits dans le cadre du projet comprennent une aide remboursable de l'APFCA qui se répartit en deux volets :

maisonsnettes de deux chambres à coucher et, ensuite, des maisonsnettes de deux chambres à coucher et, ensuite, des

« Cette dernière expansion nous a permis de trouver et de satisfaire de nouveaux marchés liés aux voyages de groupe et de prolonger notre saison bien au-delà des deux mois d'été. »

Rudy Zinn,
Quaco Inn, St. Martins (Nouveau-Brunswick)

renovations comprenant l'hivernisation de plusieurs chalets et la transformation d'une maison située sur la propriété en une auberge de cinq chambres.

L'investissement dans l'établissement Rosewood Cottages a augmenté le nombre de lieux d'hébergement touristique à longueure d'année dans le secteur de Hubbards, l'existence d'un établissement d'hébergement de qualité, adapté à la demande du marché en matière de chalets au bord de la mer, contribue à prolonger la durée de séjour des visiteurs dans la province, surtout dans la localité de Hubbards.

L'hivernisation des chalets a permis à l'entreprise de prolonger sa saison d'exploitation durant la saison intermédiaire et les mois d'hiver, attirant des visiteurs dans le secteur pendant une période de l'année où l'activité touristique est généralement réduite. Grâce aux investissements, l'entreprise a pu accroître sa cote Canada Select jusqu'au niveau quatre étoiles.

MISE EN VALEUR DU PATRIMOINE ET DE LA CULTURE EN ATLANTIQUE

La culture et le patrimoine offrent d'intéressantes perspectives à l'industrie touristique de la région de l'Atlantique. Les statistiques provinciales sur le tourisme montrent que 37 % de tous les voyages effectués dans la région comprennent un élément culturel ou patrimonial et que le marché se développe au rythme de 8 % par année.

Reconnaissant l'importance de la culture et du patrimoine de l'Atlantique, l'APFCA a offert, dans le cadre du PDE, une aide pour créer, développer et moderniser des produits interactifs culturels et patrimoniaux qui s'inscrivent dans l'approche qu'elle a adoptée pour stimuler le tourisme.

Dans le cadre de cette approche régionale, l'Agence a établi des partenariats avec Patrimoine canadien, Parcs Canada, les quatre ministères provinciaux du Tourisme ainsi que diverses administrations municipales.

Les partenariats du secteur privé étaient des organisations de marketing de destinations, des organismes sans but lucratif et des musées. Tous sont des intervenants majeurs dans la stratégie visant à développer et à moderniser les expériences culturelles et patrimoniales offertes dans la région.

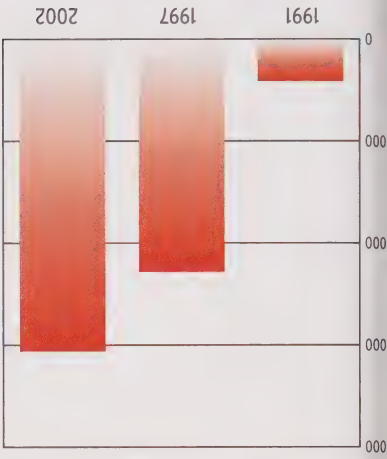
investissement de 800 000 \$, partagé entre l'APÉCA (60 %), l'industrie (35 %) et les gouvernements provinciaux (5 %).

- 80 % des entreprises touristiques de la région de l'Atlantique a nettement progressé dans l'adoption de technologies Internet et du commerce électronique, à la suite du soutien accordé par l'APÉCA au projet :
- l'Atlantique a même adopté l'« informatique à titre d'outil d'affaires » en 2002, par rapport à 64 % en 1999; 79 % étaient branchées à Internet en 2002, comparativement à 17 % en 1999;
- 87 % utilisaient le commerce électronique pour leurs relations avec la clientèle et 65 % pour leurs relations avec d'autres entreprises en 2002, contre 42 % pour les deux en 1999.

Parmi les progrès réalisés dans l'adoption de la technologie Internet, signaux de huit forums sur Internet, des communications directes avec 4 000 exploitants et un compoitor d'aide et d'information Web utilisé par 2 400 entreprises touristiques.

Figure 13

Evaluation de l'hébergement au Canada atlantique



Source : Régie d'évaluation touristique des provinces de l'Atlantique

VERS UN HÉBERGEMENT DE QUALITÉ

« Le Newfoundland and Labrador Accommodations Rating Council s'est révélé un véritable succès. En 1993, nous avons reçu des fonds de l'Agence et, en 1997, nous étions devenus autonomes. L'évaluation des établissements d'hébergement de la province selon le système d'étoiles a augmenté de 72 % de 1994 à 2001. »

Bruce Sparts,
président du NLARC

Le nombre de touristes en visite dans la région de l'Atlantique a augmenté de 57 % de 1996 à 2002, créant une demande d'établissements d'hébergement. Devant la nécessité d'appliquer les principes du développement durable et de mettre l'accent sur les PME, l'APÉCA a offert son aide, par l'entremise du PDE, afin d'établir, d'agrandir et de moderniser des établissements d'hébergement et de touristes de qualité susceptibles : i) d'attirer de nouveaux visiteurs vers la région; ii) de prolonger la durée de leur séjour; iii) de les inciter à dépenser davantage; iv) d'améliorer leur satisfaction à l'égard des installations d'hébergement dans la région.

L'approche stratégique de l'APÉCA en matière d'hébergement se fonde sur le programme de classement Canada Select. En plus de satisfaire aux critères habituels du programme, les candidats devaient, pour être admissibles à l'aide de l'Agence, obtenir une cote Canada Select d'au moins trois étoiles pour les nouveaux établissements ou au moins une augmentation d'une demi-étoile s'ils souhaitaient agrandir ou moderniser leurs installations existantes.

L'Agence a conclu des partenariats avec la Régie d'évaluation touristique (établie en 1990 pour promouvoir et normaliser l'évaluation des établissements d'hébergement en Atlantique) et avec les quatre associations provinciales de l'industrie touristique chargées d'exécuter le programme Canada Select pour assurer l'application efficace des normes de classement.



Le PTCA a donné lieu à un rendement élevé par rapport aux dépenses de fonds publics. Les ententes trénales ont produit environ 9 \$ en dépenses touristiques pour chaque dollar d'achat publicitaire investi dans les médias.

Le PTCA est un programme de promotion panatlantique complet par des initiatives des gouvernements provinciaux et du secteur privé. C'est également une tribune qui permet aux intervenants de l'industrie touristique de discuter de questions communes, de réaliser des études de marché, d'adopter des positions en matière de politiques régionales et d'élaborer des plans d'action conjoints pour le tourisme.

MISSIONS D'INITIATION AUX PRATIQUES EXEMPLAIRES

Les missions d'initiation aux pratiques exemplaires sont des voyages d'apprentissage en groupe permettant à des experts d'entreprises touristiques de l'Atlantique de collaborer avec des spécialistes de l'extérieur de la région qui offrent des produits, des destinations et des expériences touristiques de pointe. Chaque mission est consacrée à un thème particulier, choisi selon la demande dans le secteur touristique concerné. Les participants se rendent à une destination extérieure à la région de l'Atlantique pour apprendre auprès d'exploitants très prospectes qui offrent des produits semblables aux leurs. Les missions comprennent des itinéraires détaillés axés sur des colloques éducatifs, ainsi que des visites guidées d'entreprises touristiques qui ont réussi à attirer et à conserver un grand nombre de visiteurs grâce à des produits de qualité. Au nombre des thèmes abordés par le passé, mentionnons les destinations patrimoniales, le tourisme culinaire, les destinations maritimes et côtières, les randonnées pédestres, l'observation des oiseaux, la diversification des pourvoies et le tourisme autochtone.

Ces missions rendent la région plus concurrentielle en insistant sur les produits touristiques en demande et les produits naissants qui offrent la meilleure expérience possible au public. Le but ultime est le suivant : à leur retour dans la région, les participants contribueront à y améliorer le tourisme.

« L'initiative technologique du Canada atlantique a nettement contribué à accroître la compétitivité de notre secteur, en ligne et sur le marché mondial. »

Jan Wheeler, présidente,
Nova Scotia Bed & Breakfast Association

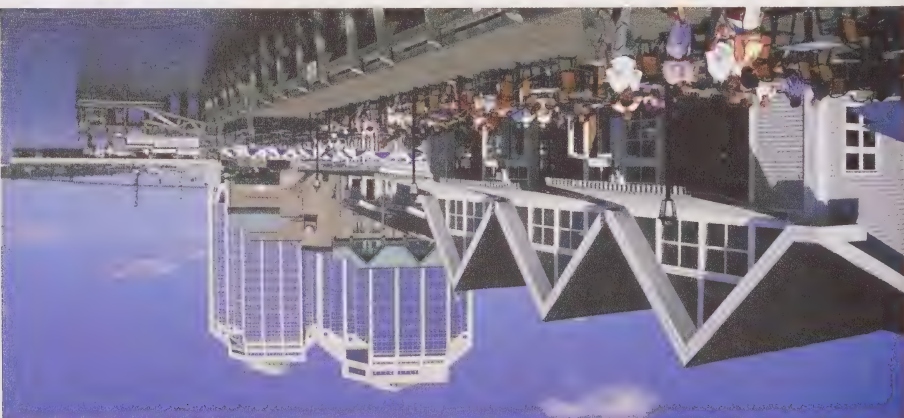
Ces missions sont axées sur une approche régionale coordonnée qui vise à améliorer la disponibilité des produits ainsi que la compétitivité de l'industrie touristique de l'Atlantique. Elles encouragent l'investissement dans des produits touristiques soulignant le caractère saisonnier, la qualité et la productivité du secteur touristique.

INITIATIVE TECHNOLOGIQUE DU CANADA ATLANTIQUE (ITCA)

L'ITCA était un projet pilote de deux ans (de 2000 à 2002) qui avait pour but de faciliter l'intégration des technologies de l'information à l'industrie touristique des provinces de l'Atlantique. Cette approche régionale coordonnée devait aider l'industrie à adopter le commerce électronique et les technologies d'Internet.

Les exploitants d'entreprises touristiques qui y ont participé ont obtenu de l'aide dans des domaines comme les ressources du Web, la technologie d'entreprises, le commerce électronique et le marketing au moyen de la technologie. Les activités portaient principalement sur trois initiatives centrales concernant l'éducation et la formation, le soutien technique, la défense des intérêts et la promotion. L'éducation et la formation comprenaient des ateliers sur divers aspects des technologies de l'information relatives au Web et aux entreprises. L'aide technique prenait la forme d'un soutien interne aux quatre associations touristiques de la région ainsi qu'aux sous-groupes touristiques et aux exploitants individuels. La défense des intérêts et la promotion se traduisaient par des activités qui aidaient l'industrie touristique à prendre conscience des avantages des technologies de l'information et à mieux les connaître, tout en encourageant les exploitants à les adopter ou à renforcer leurs capacités dans ce domaine.

L'ITCA était un partenariat formé de l'APCA et des quatre associations de l'industrie touristique de l'Atlantique. Les quatre ministères provinciaux du Tourisme ont également participé au projet en favorisant des initiatives de sensibilisation, de formation et de recherche, en harmonie avec des stratégies provinciales. L'ITCA représentait un



initiatives lancées à l'échelle régionale revêtent une importance stratégique parce qu'elles permettent de grouper les ressources et les compétences et qu'elles représentent un bon outil pour le marketing à l'étranger et pour la conception de produits de qualité. En voici trois exemples : le Partenariat de l'industrie touristique du Canada atlantique, les missions d'initiation aux pratiques exemplaires et l'Initiative technologique du Canada atlantique.

PARTENARIAT DE L'INDUSTRIE TOURISTIQUE DU CANADA ATLANTIQUE (PITCA)

Le PITCA a pour mandat d'instaurer de solides relations entre l'industrie et les gouvernements, pour valoriser la région de l'Atlantique à titre de destination touristique sur les marchés étrangers. Les stratégies de marketing visant la Nouvelle-Angleterre et les États américains du centre du littoral atlantique, l'Europe et le Japon complètent et améliorent le capital marques établi par les partenaires provinciaux et les principaux intervenants de l'industrie (transporteurs, agents de voyages, forfaitistes, organisations de marketing de destinations) sur des marchés étrangers cibles.

Le Partenariat de l'industrie touristique du Canada atlantique est constitué de neuf membres, à savoir l'APPCA, les quatre associations provinciales de l'industrie touristique et les quatre ministères provinciaux du Tourisme. Il facilite la conclusion d'autres partenariats spéciaux avec la Commission canadienne du tourisme et des forfaitistes. La troisième entente tréniennale consécutive du PITCA vient de prendre fin en mars 2003.

En moyenne, 83 % du budget du PITCA est destiné à des initiatives de marketing en Nouvelle-Angleterre et dans les États américains du centre du littoral atlantique. Une proportion de 12 % est dirigée vers certains marchés européens (le Royaume-Uni et les pays germanophones) et japonais. Le reste (5 %) est consacré à l'administration du partenariat et à l'exécution de ses programmes. Depuis 1994, le PITCA a engendré 662 000 demandes de visites par des touristes qui ont dépensé 173,2 millions de dollars pendant leurs vacances dans la région.

« Le gouvernement fédéral canadien, par l'entremise de l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique, a réuni quatre gouvernements provinciaux et des membres de l'association de l'industrie touristique de chaque province à une table de concertation, pour créer un partenariat unique et fructueux axé sur une approche régionale coordonnée pour le marketing de la région de l'Atlantique sur les marchés d'exportation. »

Extrait de A Case Study of the Atlantic Canada
Tourism Partnership 2000-2003
Neil Tilley, directeur de projet, Extension Community
Development Co-operative

L'APÉCA favorise l'adoption d'une
approche régionale sans précédent,
axée sur la coopération, le
développement et le marketing du
tourisme en Atlantique.

En tant que secteur économique, le tourisme offre de grandes perspectives d'enrichissement et de création d'emplois. Ce secteur vient renforcer les atouts régionaux connus, notamment le milieu naturel attirant de la région de l'Atlantique ainsi que la beauté de ses rivages et de ses paysages ruraux.

À titre de moteur économique, le tourisme génère maintenant 3,16 milliards de dollars par année en « revenus d'exportation », 500 millions de dollars par année en revenus fiscaux et 100 000 emplois pour les Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique. En pourcentage du PIB, il contribue beaucoup plus à l'économie de l'Atlantique (5 %) qu'à l'économie nationale (2,5 %).

Sur le plan économique, la demande touristique désigne les activités de personnes voyageant et séjournant à des endroits situés hors de leur milieu habituel durant une période maximale consecutive d'un an. Cela englobe les moments de loisirs consacrés aux excursions et aux promenades panoramiques, les visites à des amis et à des parents, les vacances ainsi que la participation à des congrès, à des conférences et à d'autres genres d'activités professionnelles ou commerciales. L'offre touristique est un amalgame de fournisseurs de services qui, ensemble, accueillent les voyageurs. Il s'agit de fournisseurs de moyens de transport et de lieux d'hébergement, de restaurants et de détaillants, d'établissements récréatifs et de spectacles ainsi que d'autres pourvoyeurs de services aux visiteurs et de services connexes.

De 1998 à 2002, les projets touristiques proposés aux PME de la région étaient issus principalement du Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE), des ententes de COOPÉRATION avec des gouvernements provinciaux ainsi que des Mesures d'adaptation et de restructuration des pêches canadiennes.

L'APÉCA est un catalyseur de l'innovation touristique dans la région de l'Atlantique. Grâce à des partenariats conclus

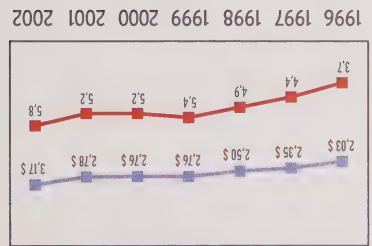
avec les associations de l'industrie touristique, des groupes du secteur privé et d'autres gouvernements, elle favorise l'adoption d'une approche régionale sans précédent, axée sur la coopération, le développement et le marketing du tourisme en Atlantique. Par son leadership, elle a contribué à attirer l'attention de l'industrie touristique sur des investissements et des activités stratégiques qui augmentent la rentabilité, l'investissement et les salaires dans le secteur touristique.

L'approche de l'APÉCA à l'égard du tourisme comprend le soutien à des projets qui :

- prolongent la saison touristique;
- améliorent la qualité et l'attrait des expériences touristiques et des produits offerts dans la région;
- augmentent les recettes et le nombre d'emplois découlant du secteur touristique;
- assurent la durabilité du tourisme dans les provinces de l'Atlantique.

Figure 12

Tourisme (recettes et visites)



Source : Ministères du Tourisme (T.-N.-L., N.-É., N.-B., I.-P.-É.)

Le leadership exercé par l'APÉCA a beaucoup favorisé l'essor du tourisme dans la région de l'Atlantique. Le nombre de touristes non résidents y a augmenté de 57 %, passant de 3,7 millions de visites en 1996 à 5,8 millions en 2002. Les recettes du tourisme ont augmenté de 57 %, passant de 2,03 milliards en 1996 à 3,17 milliards en 2002. L'emploi lié au tourisme s'est accru de 45 %, passant de 69 000 emplois en 1999 à 100 000 en 2002.

L'APÉCA est reconnue comme un chef de file dans la création d'un climat de coopération et de coordination entre les intervenants du secteur touristique de l'Atlantique. Les

Exceptional Assistant (TEA). Ce logiciel basé sur Internet gère et simplifie les processus informatisés d'administration et de gestion des prêts. Le projet aidera les CBDC à servir mieux et plus rapidement les PME clientes de leurs collectivités respectives.

Programme de capital d'appoint Connexion Jeunes Entrepreneurs

Partout en Atlantique, l'APBCA continue à fournir des prêts aux jeunes entrepreneurs dans le cadre du Programme de capital d'appoint Connexion Jeunes Entrepreneurs. Pour être le plus accessible possible dans les régions rurales, le programme est exécuté par les 41 CBDC (et six autres agents dans les régions urbaines). Environ 80 % des prêts ont été consentis dans les régions rurales. Le lecteur trouvera plus de renseignements sur ce programme dans le site Web de l'APBCA à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.acoaa-peca.gc.ca/finacial/capital.shtml>

De 1998-1999 à 2002-2003

Programme de capital d'appoint Connexion

Jeunes Entrepreneurs

- Octroi de près de 2 147 prêts
- Prestation de 21,8 millions de dollars d'aide
- Effet de levier de 45,7 millions de dollars

Un exemple de projet financé par le programme Connexion Jeunes Entrepreneurs est celui du Pilothouse Café and Cottages. " Brian Johnson et Johanna Verhagen réalisent un rêve quelque peu compromis à la suite du cauchemar du 11 septembre 2001. Après neuf mois de recherche et de planification, Brian et Johanna s'approprièrent à commencer la rénovation et la

construction de leur café et de cinq chalets à St. Margaret's Bay, quand ils ont soudain appris les lugubres prévisions concernant l'industrie touristique de la Nouvelle-Écosse pour cette année.

Ayant foi en leur projet, ils ont tout de même persévéré. Ils ont reçu les encouragements et l'aide de la société d'aide aux entreprises Blue Water Development Corporation de Musquodoboit Harbour, dans le cadre du programme Connexion Jeunes Entrepreneurs, programme d'aide aux entreprises appartenant à des jeunes.

Grâce à ce programme, ils ont reçu « d'excellents conseils en affaires et le genre de soutien et d'encouragement nécessaires pendant tout le processus d'apprentissage ». Johanna a appris à utiliser un logiciel de réservations et de gestion de la clientèle, grâce à une subvention de formation accordée dans le cadre du programme. Brian a supervisé des rénovations à grande échelle visant à transformer l'ancienne propriété historique.

En mai 2002, tous deux ont inauguré le Pilothouse Café & Cottages. Avec soulagement, ils ont bénéficié d'un haut pourcentage de réservations bien avant le moment prévu. Ils se réjouissent à l'idée de recourir à d'autres fournisseurs locaux et talentueux pour conférer un cachet évoquant les Maritimes à leur décor et à leur accueil. Entre-temps, ils sont reconnaissants à John Cooke, responsable de la Blue Water Development Corporation, pour son soutien exceptionnel : « Il nous a envoyé des articles, dit Brian, il a cru en notre projet et il fait toujours plus qu'on ne lui demande. Les gens de Blue Water semblaient aussi enthousiastes que nous. »



Symposium sur le développement économique des collectivités

Au Nouveau-Brunswick, l'APBCA, le gouvernement du Nouveau-Brunswick et les principaux intervenants en développement économique ont établi un nouveau modèle de développement économique des collectivités en 2002-2003, et ils ont créé 15 organismes de développement économique communautaire (ODEC) pour remplacer les 13 commissions de développement économique régional (CDER). Ce nouveau modèle prévoyait une participation communautaire accrue et mettait davantage d'accent sur la planification stratégique et l'imputabilité. Il était prévu que les collectivités pourraient ainsi raffermir leur base économique par des moyens durables et stratégiques.

Compte tenu de la création des nouveaux ODEC et des défis que suscite constamment le développement économique des collectivités, le bureau régional de l'APBCA au Nouveau-Brunswick a organisé un symposium en 2002 pour rassembler les partenaires oeuvrant dans le développement économique, en vue de susciter des idées et de sensibiliser les intervenants au développement, à l'investissement et à la création d'emplois. L'objectif consistait surtout à encourager les localités à faire preuve d'initiative et à prendre en main leur propre développement économique. Près de 200 professionnels du développement économique ont participé à l'événement, qui a fourni l'impulsion nécessaire à la nouvelle approche en matière de développement économique des collectivités, tout en constituant une excellente occasion de créer des réseaux.

The Exceptional Assistant

Dans le cadre de son engagement à l'égard du développement économique à long terme, l'Agence a fourni une contribution de 1,3 million de dollars pour implanter à l'échelle régionale le programme The

« Cette technologie confère au réseau des 41 corporations de développement communautaire, qui sont situées dans des localités rurales des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique, les systèmes d'informatisés d'administration et de gestion de prêts les plus avancés qui soient parmi les sociétés d'aide au développement des collectivités de tout le Canada. »

Basil Ryan, président-directeur général, Fonds d'investissement du Canada atlantique dans les entreprises locales

L'événement a rassemblé les trois ordres de gouvernement, des représentants communautaires et des bénévoles qui ont échangé de l'information, pris connaissance des pratiques exemplaires d'autres juridictions et discuté de nouvelles façons de créer des collectivités solides et prospères.

opérations canadiennes chez Register.com, a fait observer que les taux de roulement du personnel sont nettement inférieurs à la moyenne de l'industrie.

En fournissant une installation à Register.com, la collectivité a aussi pu améliorer son infrastructure de communications, qui attire maintenant de nouvelles activités complémentaires exigeant une connectivité pour des données à haute vitesse. Frank Anderson, pdg de la Southwest Shore Development Authority et principal artisan de ce modèle à suivre, souligne que les avantages pour la collectivité et la région se feront sentir pendant plusieurs années encore. La collectivité se sert maintenant de cet exemple de coopération pour promouvoir la région du Sud-Ouest de la Nouvelle-Ecosse afin d'y attirer des habitants et des investisseurs.

Sydney Mines Renewal Association, Cap-Breton

C'est en septembre 2002 que l'on annonçait la troisième et dernière phase d'un projet communautaire de revitalisation du centre-ville de Sydney Mines. Les habitants de la localité ont bien accueilli ce projet d'amélioration de l'infrastructure, dirigé par la Sydney Mines Renewal Association (SMRA), en partenariat avec tous les ordres d'administration publique et avec le secteur privé, en vue de rehausser l'image du centre-ville et d'en accroître la viabilité économique.

La SMRA, formée du clergé des cinq principales églises de la collectivité, a été mise sur pied en 1998, pour stimuler le développement économique et les projets de renouvellement au centre-ville de Sydney Mines ainsi que pour améliorer le bien-être socioéconomique de toute la collectivité.

La ville de Sydney Mines a été durement touchée par la fermeture des mines de charbon dans l'Île du Cap-Breton. La Sydney Mines Renewal Association s'efforce d'améliorer le sort de la collectivité. L'appui et la participation de la collectivité au projet de relance ont été étonnants. À ce jour, 24 entreprises locales se sont engagées à participer au programme

Révé. Karen Ralph, présidente de la Sydney Mines Renewal Association

« Un centre-ville revitalisé est la pierre angulaire de futures perspectives économiques pour Sydney Mines. Sans les partenariats avec tous les ordres d'administration publique, ainsi qu'avec les propriétaires privés, notre rêve n'aurait jamais pu se concrétiser. »

d'amélioration des devantures de la collectivité et ont en valeur des espaces verts et huit projets de panneaux indicateurs ont été entrepris, et d'autres projets devraient débuter à l'automne 2003.

Eastern Kings Community Enhancement Corporation, Île-du-Prince-Édouard

Ce projet de développement économique des collectivités comprenait la restauration d'un édifice historique à Sours (Île-du-Prince-Édouard). L'édifice Mathew McLean, construit en 1869 par des entrepreneurs locaux, l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, a servi d'important centre commercial pour l'Est de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard durant plus de 100 ans.

La municipalité de Sours a acheté le bâtiment en 2000, et l'Eastern Kings Community Enhancement Corporation, un groupe local de bénévoles oeuvrant pour le développement, a entrepris de le rénover entièrement. Une partie de l'espace ainsi récupéré accueillera une exposition d'interprétation mettant en valeur l'histoire et la culture de la région, et une grande partie de l'espace a été loué à bail à long terme au gouvernement provincial (pour l'aménagement d'un centre d'information touristique) ainsi qu'à deux entreprises privées (une boutique d'artisanat et un restaurant).

L'APCA a collaboré étroitement avec le gouvernement provincial. Développement des ressources humaines Canada, la municipalité de Sours et l'Eastern Kings Community Enhancement Corporation à l'étape de la planification, du financement et de la mise en oeuvre du projet. L'initiative a connu un franc succès dans la collectivité et suscite beaucoup d'intérêt de la part des résidents et des visiteurs dans la région. Elle a été mentionnée dans un plan touristique stratégique rédigé pour la région, et les bénévoles qui y ont travaillé ont fait un excellent travail, encourageant ainsi d'autres personnes de la région à participer à d'autres projets de développement des collectivités.

de perspectives d'emploi dans les secteurs ruraux a contribué à l'exode de jeunes qui partent faire des études post-secondaires ou chercher de meilleurs débouchés. Cette tendance à l'urbanisation est également évidente pour l'ensemble du pays. À Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, on a constaté un fléchissement démographique beaucoup plus prononcé dans les secteurs ruraux et urbains, en raison du déclin des pêches, au début des années 1990. Compte tenu de l'importante perte survenue à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (7 %), la population globale de la région de l'Atlantique a diminué de 2,1 % de 1996 à 2001, par contraste avec une augmentation de 4 % pour l'ensemble du pays.

L'APÉCA ET LE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE DES COLLECTIVITÉS

La participation de l'APÉCA au développement économique des collectivités s'inscrit dans un cadre de priorités et d'activités adaptées aux perspectives et aux besoins locaux. Pour l'Agence, le développement économique des collectivités repose sur de multiples ententes de partenariat et réseaux dynamiques. Voici des exemples de travail que réalise l'APÉCA dans ce domaine dans chacune des provinces de l'Atlantique.

Ateliers sur le développement économique des

collectivités, Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador

Depuis janvier 2000, les municipalités de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador sont autorisées par la loi à entreprendre des projets locaux de développement économique. L'APÉCA a répondu à une initiative de la fédération des municipalités de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador visant à aider les municipalités à se préparer à intervenir dans le développement économique au moyen d'ateliers sur le sujet.

L'initiative a pris la forme d'un projet plurianuel conjoint d'information et de formation en trois étapes :

- la première étape prévoyait une série d'ateliers axés sur la réorientation et la réorganisation du savoir qui est à la base du développement économique des collectivités;
- la deuxième étape comprenait une série d'ateliers pratiques sur le perfectionnement des compétences;
- la troisième étape présentait des ateliers sur les applications (l'apprentissage à partir de pratiques exemplaires) issues des leçons tirées d'une série de visites d'étude sur la participation de l'administration locale au développement économique des collectivités dans cinq administrations (Islande, Écosse, Suède, Kentucky et Nord de la Colombie-Britannique).

Installation d'opérations en technologies de l'information, Yarmouth (Nouvelle-Écosse)

précédents dans ce processus.

Cette initiative donne encore de multiples résultats positifs. À la demande de la Fédération canadienne des municipalités, on a présenté, à l'occasion de l'assemblée générale annuelle de 2001 des intervenants de cette initiative, un exemple de collaboration fédérale-municipale directe. L'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques a aussi souligné cette initiative dans son examen des politiques territoriales du Canada (2002), en signalant que cette démarche stratégique avait permis au gouvernement fédéral de stimuler le développement dans la région.

Au niveau local, l'initiative a été avantageuse pour environ 200 des 291 municipalités constituées de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador. Il est très important de souligner que les ateliers ont tous été animés par des conseillers municipaux élus. Plutôt que d'embaucher un animateur extérieur, les conseillers eux-mêmes ont consacré du temps et des efforts à apprendre le contenu et à se le présenter mutuellement. Cette initiative a permis à l'APÉCA de soutenir, en collaboration avec des intervenants locaux et régionaux, la planification et la mise en oeuvre intégrées du développement économique. En fournissant des renseignements opportuns, pertinents et utiles, elle a aidé les administrations locales à devenir des partenaires actifs et précieus dans ce processus.

Cette collaboration a mis plusieurs années à se cimenter et a nécessité l'intervention de nombreux participants issus d'organismes de développement économique, de municipalités, d'établissements d'enseignement, de décideurs élus et du gouvernement. Le résultat de la coopération est un centre d'appels efficace à Yarmouth, qui fournit un emploi satisfaisant et stable à plus de 200 personnes dans la nouvelle économie et qui met en valeur la région du Sud-Ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse. La contribution de l'APÉCA (950 000 \$) a été remise à la Yarmouth and Area Industrial Commission, qui reste propriétaire du bâtiment des TI où le centre d'appels fonctionne à plein régime. L'immuable est considéré comme un élément clé de l'infrastructure de la collectivité et témoigne de la capacité de la localité de trouver d'innovantes solutions innovatrices pour optimiser les perspectives d'affaires. David Hill, directeur des



Le rôle et la structure des ORDE de l'Atlantique évoluent selon l'expérience et les circonstances. L'APFCA a contribué activement à établir ce réseau de développement économique des collectivités dans la région en fournissant de l'information, de l'expertise, un soutien technique professionnel et des fonds cibles.

DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE DES COLLECTIVITÉS - CONTEXTE

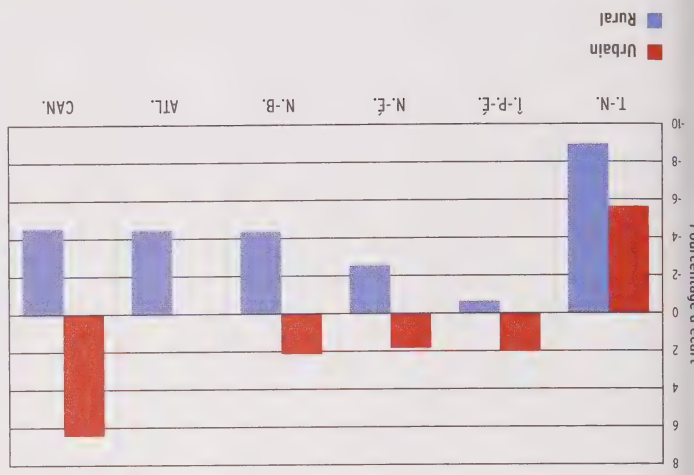
Même si l'économie globale de la région de l'Atlantique

affiche un très bon rendement depuis cinq ans, le chômage et le dépeuplement rural demeurent de graves problèmes. Dans les régions rurales, les taux de chômage restent très élevés au Cap-Breton, dans le Nord-Est du Nouveau-Brunswick et dans les secteurs situés au-delà de la presqu'île Avalon, à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador.

Comme l'indique la figure 1, la population des secteurs urbains des provinces Maritimes a légèrement augmenté de 1996 à 2001, tandis qu'elle a diminué dans les secteurs ruraux. Le manque relatif

formé de 20 conseils de développement économique régional à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, de 13 administrations de développement régional en Nouvelle-Écosse, de 15 organismes de développement économique communautaire (ODEC) au Nouveau-Brunswick ainsi que de quatre corporations de développement communautaire à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. Dans tous les cas, ces organismes sont constitués en vertu des lois provinciales à titre de sociétés privées sans but lucratif relevant d'un conseil d'administration local. Elles sont chargées d'élaborer et de mettre en œuvre des plans stratégiques et opérationnels coordonnés pour les régions de la province qui sont visées par leurs mandats respectifs.

Croissance démographique (urbaine et rurale) Atlantique et Canada, 1996-2001



Source : Statistique Canada, Recensement de 2001

DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE DES COLLECTIVITÉS

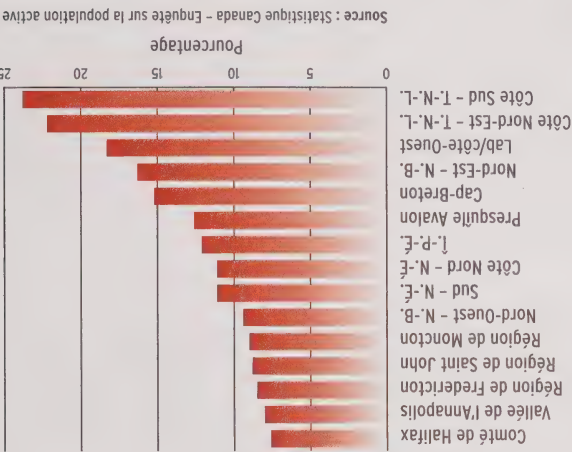
Environ 46 % de la population de la région de l'Atlantique habite dans des localités rurales, et la force économique de ces collectivités est au cœur de la santé économique de la région.

Le développement économique des collectivités est un élément clé de la stratégie fédérale de développement régional. Pour respecter cette priorité stratégique, l'APÉCA collabore avec des partenaires régionaux et locaux afin de rendre les collectivités plus aptes à créer des possibilités de développement économique viables.

Les objectifs de l'APÉCA en matière de développement économique des collectivités sont les suivants : intensifier la coordination et la coopération entre les partenaires de l'Atlantique; mettre plus de capitaux d'entreprise à la disposition des localités rurales; créer des emplois durables en milieu rural; renforcer la planification stratégique à l'échelle communautaire et, enfin, mobiliser les collectivités et les encourager à prendre en main leur propre développement économique.

Environ 46 % de la population de la région de l'Atlantique habite dans des localités rurales¹⁰, et la force économique de ces collectivités est au cœur de la santé économique de la région. La participation locale forme l'une des pierres angulaires de la stratégie de développement économique appliquée par l'APÉCA. Les 41 corporations de développement communautaire (CBDC), organismes sans but lucratif contrôlés par des collectivités et disséminés partout en Atlantique, se sont révélés des partenaires efficaces dans l'apport

Figure 10
Le chômage est surtout un problème rural
Taux de chômage - 2002



Source : Statistique Canada - Enquête sur la population active

de capitaux et la prestation de services de consultation aux localités rurales dans la région. Du 1^{er} avril 1995 au 31 mars 2002, les CBDC ont consenti 9 651 prêts totalisant 259 millions de dollars à des entreprises de leurs collectivités, ce qui a engendré 253 millions de dollars en investissements supplémentaires dans le secteur privé.

En outre, le Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique (PICA) prévoit l'octroi de 135 millions de dollars sur une période de cinq ans pour le développement économique des localités rurales, grâce au Fonds d'investissement stratégique dans les collectivités. Dans le cadre du Programme de développement des entreprises, l'APÉCA continue à investir massivement dans les initiatives rurales, en adressant environ 65 % de l'aide directement aux entreprises rurales ou aux organismes de développement économique situés à l'extérieur des zones métropolitaines. L'Agence coordonne encore activement l'activité fédérale dans les localités de toute la région de l'Atlantique. Grâce à son partenariat avec les 52 organismes régionaux de développement économique (ORDÉ) des provinces de l'Atlantique, elle a favorisé l'instauration d'un climat de coopération pour la création d'entreprises communautaires et le développement économique. Ce réseau d'ORDÉ est

¹⁰ Statistique Canada, recensement de 2001. La population des régions rurales se définit comme suit : la différence entre la population de la province et la population des secteurs urbains, c'est-à-dire les zones comptant une concentration minimale de 1 000 personnes et une densité démographique d'au moins 400 personnes au kilomètre carré.



La partie du projet national dévolue aux provinces de l'Atlantique est coordonnée par l'Association des universités de l'Atlantique et soutenue par la Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation, les quatre gouvernements provinciaux de l'Atlantique ainsi que tous les collèges et universités publiques de la région.

Le projet fournira des renseignements numériques abordables et accessibles aux chercheurs des campus et de l'extérieur. Il augmentera nettement le nombre et la qualité des travaux de recherche menés dans la région, tout en permettant aux universités et aux collèges d'attirer des employés et des étudiants compétents.

Grâce à cette initiative, les industries et entreprises de toute la région ont aussi accès à une technologie de pointe, ce qui rejoint l'objectif fondamental de la stratégie d'innovation de l'APÉCA, c'est-à-dire d'augmenter les activités et les capacités d'innovation, de recherche et de développement en Atlantique.



récents progrès de la microélectronique, de la taille des membranes et de la fabrication de cartes de circuit imprimé. Elle a travaillé ce projet avec des partenaires de l'Ontario et du Royaume-Uni. Son nouveau produit lui a valu le Prix d'excellence à l'exportation canadienne 2002 (innovation et technologie).

Innovation en matière de qualité environnementale, Rawdon Technologies Ltd., Cap-Breton

Rawdon Technologies Ltd., de Sydney, figure au nombre des 430 entreprises de l'industrie environnementale, secteur d'activité qui connaît un essor particulièrement rapide en Nouvelle-Écosse. Rawdon Technologies est à l'origine d'importants progrès technologiques dans le domaine du traitement de l'eau et des eaux usées. La société a été constituée en novembre 1998 dans le cadre d'une collaboration entre trois entreprises : Lynk Electric Limited de Sydney, ABL Environmental Consultants de Dartmouth et Trihedral Engineering Limited de Bedford.

Rawdon a grandement contribué au succès de la station de purification d'eau de Birch Grove, une installation entièrement automatisée, surveillée et contrôlée par des opérateurs de la municipalité régionale du Cap-Breton grâce au système principal de contrôle et d'acquisition de données de la municipalité. Ce système est unique en son genre parce qu'il a été entièrement conçu, mis au point et fabriqué de manière à être convivial et à optimiser le recours au processus de flottation à l'air dissous.

Institut de recherche médicale Beauséjour, Nouveau-Brunswick

L'Institut de recherche médicale Beauséjour est un établissement de recherche sans but lucratif

spécialisé dans la création et la promotion de progrès scientifiques et de moyens de commercialisation en biotechnologie, en biothérapie appliquée et en génétique. Mettant à profit les capacités de recherche et d'analyse qu'elle a acquises dans de multiples domaines, depuis la syphilose, d'ADN jusqu'à la culture cellulaire en

D' Rodney Ouellette, directeur scientifique de l'Institut de recherche médicale Beauséjour

« L'investissement de l'APÉCA nous a permis d'établir fermement notre infrastructure de recherche. Nous avons pu obtenir des fonds des secteurs public et privé. Aujourd'hui, nous pouvons aspirer à recruter les meilleurs spécialistes et tirer parti des programmes de financement régionaux et nationaux pour mener des recherches de pointe. »

passant par les modèles in vivo, l'établissement cherche surtout à comprendre et à traiter le cancer. Établi en 1998 avec l'aide de l'APÉCA et soutenu par l'Université de Moncton, la Corporation hospitalière Beauséjour et la Fondation de l'Hôpital D'-Georges-L.-Dumont, l'établissement illustre à merveille dans quelle mesure les partenariats peuvent stimuler la capacité de recherche de la région et promouvoir à la fois les découvertes scientifiques et la commercialisation de nouvelles technologies.

L'Institut compte actuellement à son service 25 employés hautement qualifiés, y compris des chercheurs, des médecins, des infirmiers, des techniciens et des étudiants du deuxième ou de troisième cycle.

Participation de la région de l'Atlantique au Projet canadien de licences nationales de sites

En 1999, l'Association des bibliothèques de recherche du Canada a lancé un projet de 50 millions de dollars pour donner à tous ses membres, au moyen d'une base de données numérique, accès à un grand éventail de publications techniques et scientifiques, évitant ainsi le coût prohibitif d'un ensemble d'abonnements individuels.

« Le Projet canadien de licences nationales de sites a aidés à constituer une capacité de recherche-développement. La nouvelle infrastructure d'information qui a ainsi été créée a mis les chercheurs des petites universités presque sur un pied d'égalité avec ceux qui travaillent dans les universités plus grosses et plus fortunées du pays; cela est particulièrement important pour des régions comme l'Atlantique où la proportion de petites universités est plus forte qu'ailleurs au pays. »

David Pink, Université St. Francis Xavier, Antigonish (Nouvelle-Écosse), membre du conseil de la Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation

du bon : 40 % pour la région par rapport à 18 % pour l'ensemble du pays.

Voici un profil illustrant

cinq exemples

d'investissements en

matière d'innovation

effectués par l'Agence de

1998 à 2003.

Génome Atlantique

Constituée en société en

juillet 2000, Génome

Atlantique est basée à

Halifax et figure au

nombre des cinq centres

régionaux établis dans

tout le Canada, conjointement avec Génome Canada,

organismes sans but lucratif qui forme le fer de lance des

efforts déployés pour faire du Canada un chef de file

mondial en recherche génomique. Génome Atlantique est

un consortium sans but lucratif représentant des

universités, les gouvernements et d'autres partenaires de

la région de l'Atlantique. Il cherche à occuper le premier

rang mondial dans certains domaines de la génomique,

surtout en ce qui concerne les microbes, les pommes de

terre et l'épinette.

Après l'annonce du financement de Génome Canada dans

le budget de 2000, Génome Atlantique a été créée par

l'Université Dalhousie, l'Université du Nouveau-Brunswick,

l'Université de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, l'Université

Memorial de Terre-Neuve, le Conseil national de

recherches du Canada et Génome Canada. Ce dernier

organisme finance 50 % des coûts totaux des projets de

recherche-développement, considérés par un comité

d'examen international

comme des travaux de

recherche de calibre

mondial. Jusqu'à présent,

Génome Atlantique a reçu

plus de 15 millions de

dollars de Génome Canada

pour entreprendre quatre

projets génomiques de

grande envergure et pour

établir une installation de

séquençage de l'ADN à

Halifax. En juillet 2002,

Génome Atlantique s'est vu

« Cette contribution du FIA est critique pour l'innovation dans les provinces de l'Atlantique et contribuera à rendre la région plus concurrentielle à mesure que nous utiliserons le savoir de manière plus ciblée, afin de créer une économie vigoureuse et innovatrice. »

Joe Gillis, pdg de Génome Atlantique

« Dans notre industrie, la mise au point de nouveaux produits exige de gros investissements en recherche. Nous remercions l'APECA d'avoir soutenu nos travaux de recherche-développement, qui ont mené à la création de cette technologie innovatrice primée. »

Jim Lotimer, pdg de LOTEK Wireless, T.-N.-L.

accorder dans le cadre du FIA un montant supplémentaire de 9 millions de dollars qui complète la contribution de Génome Canada.

Génome Atlantique créera une grappe de compétences géonomiques et scientifiques indispensable qui permettra à la région d'attirer et de conserver des chercheurs de calibre mondial dans ce domaine important. Outre une meilleure capacité de recherche-développement et des découvertes accrues,

Génome Atlantique se voudra un instrument de commercialisation très utile pour favoriser la protection et l'exploitation de la propriété intellectuelle ainsi que la création d'entreprises dérivées pour la commercialisation des nouvelles découvertes.

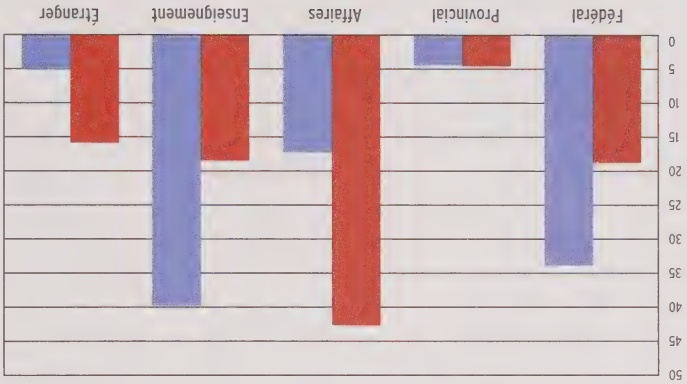
Enregistrement de données sur les conditions ambiantes des océans, LOTEK Wireless Inc., Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador

LOTEK Wireless Inc. a créé un dispositif utile aux spécialistes des sciences de la mer du monde entier : la plus petite étiquette d'enregistrement de données à référence géographique au monde pour contribuer à suivre les déplacements du saumon en haute mer.

Contrôlée par microprocesseur, cette étiquette enregistre des données comme la luminosité et permet aux chercheurs de repérer l'emplacement des lectures. Les scientifiques posent des étiquettes sur des animaux marins depuis plus de 20 ans. Bien que les dispositifs utilisés à cette fin soient relativement perfectionnés depuis quelques années, aucun n'était assez petit pour permettre l'étude du saumon.

Avec l'aide de l'APECA, LOTEK a pu mettre au point cette étiquette grâce aux

Pourcentage de répartition



Financement - R et D par secteur
Atlantique et Canada, 2000

Source : Statistique Canada

Figure 9

Une autre composante du PICa joue un rôle clé dans le domaine de l'innovation en Atlantique : l'Initiative de développement des compétences en innovation (IDCI), qui découle du Partenariat pour l'entreprenement et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires, L'IDCI favorise le renforcement de capacités d'innovation durables en aidant les entreprises à partager leurs compétences en gestion de l'innovation et des technologies. Les fonds sont consentis au cas par cas, et les promoteurs soumettent leur proposition dans le cadre du Programme de développement des entreprises. Il se peut que le FISC et les investissements

L'un des volets du PICa, le FIA, vise à renforcer la capacité d'innovation grâce à des investissements dans des activités de recherche-développement qui mènent à la commercialisation de nouveaux produits, services et technologies dans des secteurs économiques ayant démontré un potentiel de croissance. On a constitué pour le FIA un conseil consultatif indépendant formé de personnes compétentes ayant une expérience de la recherche-développement et de la recherche-développement. Les fonds ont été accordés aux promoteurs des projets plus méritants, à l'issue d'une demande de propositions.

COOPÉRATION Canada - Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador.
de 31,4 millions de dollars dans l'Entente de
sommées vient s'ajouter un investissement complémententaire
développement économique des collectivités. À ces

INVESTIR DANS L'INNOVATION

Le FIA apporte un stimulant majeur à l'envergure et au rythme de l'innovation dans la région et mise sur le rôle croissant de l'Agence dans l'établissement de partenariats en innovation. Les activités de recherche-développement dans la région sont beaucoup moins nombreuses qu'à l'échelle nationale. En 2000, les dépenses totales en recherche-développement dans la région de l'Atlantique équivalaient à 1,1 % du PIB par rapport à 1,9 % pour le Canada. La région dépend

beaucoup plus du secteur public, y compris des institutions gouvernementales et des établissements d'enseignement, tant pour le financement que pour le rendement des activités de recherche-développement. Le secteur privé ne finance que 18 % de toutes les activités de recherche-développement en Atlantique, proportion bien inférieure à celle qui est enregistrée pour l'ensemble du Canada (42 %). En particulier, le gouvernement fédéral est très présent dans ce domaine : 34 % dans la région, comparativement à 18 % pour l'ensemble du Canada. Les universités, surtout les

faits au titre du commerce servent aussi à financer des initiatives d'innovation. Le lecteur trouvera au chapitre 3 d'autres détails sur les investissements faits dans le cadre du FIA au 31 mars 2003.

établissements d'enseignement supérieur, occupent la part



celle du Canada de 1997 à 2001, à savoir à 1,5 %. Les gains réalisés dans le secteur des ressources, surtout dans l'industrie pétrolière et gazière, ont favorisé la croissance de la productivité globale dans la région. Grâce à des gains de productivité au sein de la main-d'œuvre, notamment dans les industries alimentaire et papetière, le secteur de la fabrication affiche un taux de productivité relativement élevé, soit une hausse annuelle moyenne de 0,6 % de 1997 à 2001, ce qui est supérieur au taux de 0,1 % enregistré à l'échelle nationale. Cependant, malgré ce récent redressement, la productivité de la main-d'œuvre au Canada atlantique ou la valeur ajoutée par employé est restée à 81 % du niveau national en 2001.

En juin 2000, l'APÉCA a lancé le Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique (PICA), programme quinquennal dont un aspect fondamental consiste à renforcer chez les Canadiens de l'Atlantique la capacité d'innover et de soutenir la concurrence dans une économie mondiale du savoir. Le PICA prévoit les grands investissements suivants : 300 millions de dollars pour l'innovation et 110 millions pour l'expansion des activités du Conseil national de recherches du Canada dans la région, 64 millions pour le commerce et l'investissement, 59,6 millions pour l'entrepreneuriat et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires et 135 millions pour le

ont déclaré une hausse de 95 % des salaires entre 1998 et 2001, par rapport à une hausse de 40 % pour toutes celles qui ont bénéficié de l'aide du PDE. En ce qui concerne le soutien à l'acquisition de nouvelles compétences, la plupart des PMB indiquaient que les investissements avaient eu des retombées sur leurs marges bénéficiaires et leurs stratégies de croissance.

En juin 2000, l'APÉCA a lancé le Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique qui consiste à renforcer chez les Canadiens de l'Atlantique la capacité d'innover et de soutenir la concurrence dans une économie mondiale du savoir.

Bien que l'attribution soit difficile à mesurer, il faut noter que les gains de productivité observés dans le secteur de la fabrication de la région ont augmenté par rapport à la moyenne nationale depuis quelques années. Malgré les difficultés, la productivité s'est maintenue au rythme de

La vision de l'APÉCA pour l'innovation dans la région de l'Atlantique consiste à créer une région reconnue pour sa capacité d'innovation, sa compétitivité sur les marchés mondiaux et son climat propice à l'innovation pour les PME.

Pour concrétiser cette vision, l'APÉCA doit relever certains défis fondamentaux, dont les plus importants sont de regrouper les principaux éléments du réseau d'innovation de la région, afin de promouvoir l'interaction entre les intervenants en matière d'innovation et faciliter l'établissement de secteurs et grappes stratégiques. Il faut également renforcer la capacité d'innovation des PME en leur facilitant l'accès à des sources de financement axé sur le risque et en leur permettant de concevoir et de commercialiser de nouvelles idées. De plus, il importe d'éliminer les principales contraintes en matière de ressources humaines auxquelles sont exposées les entreprises innovatrices, surtout dans l'économie du savoir, et d'aider la région à attirer et à retenir des diplômés compétents.

Enfin, il faut voir à ce que les entreprises de l'Atlantique puissent tirer pleinement parti des produits de la recherche menée dans la région et à ce que les provinces de l'Atlantique soient bien reconnues pour leur rôle innovateur, contribuant à la fois à l'élaboration de politiques et programmes nationaux et à l'accessibilité des retombées connexes.

Comme l'indique la figure 8, les entreprises de fabrication ont un taux d'adoption des technologies de pointe très inférieur à la moyenne nationale : seules 26 % d'entre elles utilisent au moins une technologie de pointe (sur un possibilité de 22), par rapport à 35 % pour le Canada.

⁷ Enquête sur les innovations, Statistique Canada 1999.
⁸ Évaluation du Programme de développement des entreprises, APÉCA, février 2003.

« Au XXI^e siècle, nous devons mener notre action à la fois sur les fronts social et économique. Nous pourrions ainsi montrer au monde entier un Canada dont la société est vouée à l'innovation comme à l'inclusion, à l'excellence comme à la justice. »
premier ministre du Canada, janvier 2001

Le soutien accordé par l'Agence a engendré une forte croissance économique attribuable à une augmentation des ventes, à une hausse de productivité et à la création d'emplois plus spécialisés et mieux rémunérés. Par exemple, une récente évaluation du Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE)⁸ révèle que les sociétés entreprenant des projets d'innovation

Les recherches révèlent que l'obstacle le plus répandu à l'introduction d'un nouveau produit ou de nouvelles technologies de traitement est le coût élevé de la mise au point (dans 65 % des cas), suivi de l'incapacité de consacrer en permanence du personnel à temps plein aux projets de recherche à cause des exigences de production (61 %) et du manque de personnel compétent (38 %). L'APÉCA travaille activement à stimuler les gains de productivité en s'attaquant à ces obstacles.

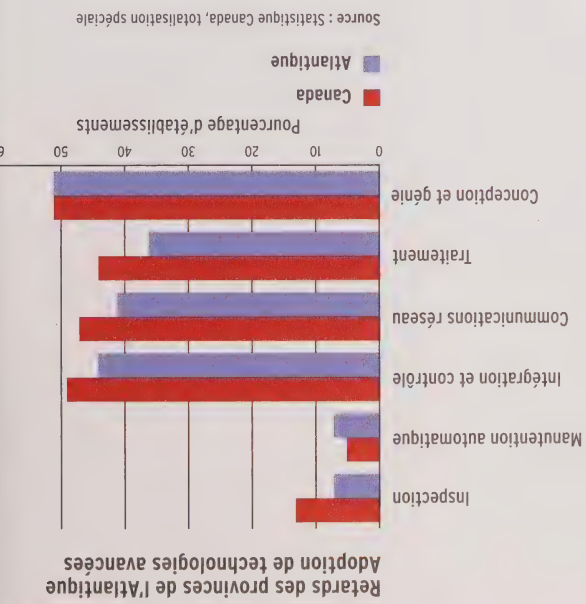


Figure 8

Plan fédéral pour l'égalité entre les sexes

En 2000, l'APCA a entrepris un examen structuré pour cerner les principaux besoins des femmes qui exploitent leur propre entreprise. L'analyse a donné lieu à la création de l'Initiative Femmes en affaires (IFA), projet triennal de 17 millions de dollars annoncé par le ministre d'État à l'APCA en octobre 2002. L'objectif de l'IFA consiste à stimuler la croissance et la compétitivité des entreprises appartenant à des femmes ainsi qu'à en augmenter le nombre dans les nouveaux secteurs de pointe. L'IFA vise à partager les compétences en affaires de ces femmes, à leur faciliter l'accès à des capitaux et à des services de soutien aux entreprises ainsi qu'à renforcer leur capacité d'exportation et d'innovation.

Depuis octobre 2002, l'APCA a créé : une équipe spécialisée de l'IFA qui compte des membres aux quatre coins de l'Atlantique; des partenariats avec des organismes comme la Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs, la Prince Edward Island Business Women's Association Inc. et l'Association d'Atlantique; une liste d'experts-conseils compétents qui peuvent offrir des services de consultation pour le compte des Services conseils pour les femmes d'affaires ainsi qu'une stratégie et des documents de promotion.

Pour mieux appliquer sa stratégie d'affaires et développer ses capacités de marketing, VMP s'est adressée à la Société d'expansion du Cap-Breton (qui exécute les programmes de l'APCA dans l'île). Elle souhaitait lancer une campagne de publicité énergetique pour se faire connaître sur des marchés extérieurs à la région de l'Atlantique, surtout en Nouvelle-Angleterre et à New York. Grâce à ce projet, elle a pu embaucher un gestionnaire du marketing promotionnelles. Depuis lors, elle lance des campagnes à temps plein pour concevoir et lancer des activités publicitaires dans les médias et participe à des expositions touristiques et à des salons professionnels. VMP fait ses preuves en animation professionnelle et prend de l'expansion sur de nouveaux marchés, contribuant ainsi à la prospérité économique et à la création d'emplois dans la région du Cap-Breton.

VMP a réalisé deux émissions animées par ordinateur : *Little Buck's Christmas* a été diffusée à CTV pour la première fois en décembre 2000, et *Evil Schneerl*, une émission spéciale d'Halloween, a été diffusée à Téléton en décembre 2001. *Little Buck's Christmas* a été sélectionnée pour distribution par Peppermint, l'un des plus importants distributeurs d'émissions de télévision.

Fondée par deux jeunes entrepreneurs, VMP ne cesse de croître depuis quelques années, et elle compte présentement 15 employés.

En 2001-2002, c'est quelquel 4 000 étudiants de toutes disciplines universitaires qui ont bénéficié des services des CUAÉ.

Perfectionnement des compétences en affaires, ProfitHabilité

L'APÉCA sait fort bien que les entrepreneurs doivent constamment acquérir de nouvelles compétences en gestion lorsqu'ils lancent et développent une entreprise. Au Nouveau-Brunswick, l'Agence travaille avec le Groupe de formation Nouveau-Brunswick Inc. (GFNB) pour dispenser une formation dans ce domaine. Le GFNB est un organisme autonome qui compte de nombreux instructeurs expérimentés dans le domaine des affaires, et il a mis au point ProfitHabilité pour mieux faire son travail.

ProfitHabilité regroupe des instructeurs et des entrepreneurs dans des ateliers qui permettent aux participants de perfectionner leurs compétences en affaires de façon peu coûteuse, tout en leur donnant l'occasion de faire un peu de réseautage. Il offre des séances de consultation individuelles postérieures à la formation, pour que les bénéficiaires mettent en pratique les compétences et les techniques nouvellement acquises.

La formation porte

sur tout le marketing et les ventes, la planification stratégique, le perfectionnement des ressources humaines, la gestion financière, la gestion générale, les opérations et les

« Les ateliers de ProfitHabilité étaient très instructifs et motivants. Mon entreprise prend de l'expansion grâce aux nombreuses choses que j'ai apprises. »

Susan Robichaud, propriétaire d'Ink Spot Marketing and Design, entreprise de Miramichi

technologies de l'information. ProfitHabilité offre aussi un site Web comprenant un service de diagnostic pour entrepreneurs, l'accès à des experts et à des conseillers, de même que des renseignements utiles aux entrepreneurs. Le GFNB collabore étroitement avec 25 partenaires en marketing, y compris des organismes de développement économique de la province. Les CBD, les organismes de développement économique des collectivités, les membres de commerce locales et d'autres agences de planification et à la présentation des séances d'information destinées aux entrepreneurs actuels et futurs. La croissance de ProfitHabilité est impressionnante.

Perfectionnement des compétences en affaires, Virtual Media Productions Ltd.

L'APÉCA aide aussi les entreprises individuelles à développer leur esprit d'entrepreneurs et leurs compétences en affaires, pour la simple raison que près des trois quarts des entreprises de la région de l'Atlantique comptent moins de cinq employés. Leur capacité de survie et de croissance est donc souvent limitée par la disponibilité des ressources et des compétences internes. En d'autres termes, elles ne possèdent pas toujours l'expérience en marketing, en commerce ou en innovation nécessaire à leur croissance. L'APÉCA est en mesure d'aider des entreprises comme Virtual Media Productions Limited (VMP).



Centres universitaires d'aide aux entreprises

Il faut un réseau de soutien étendu pour aider les particuliers qui veulent se lancer en affaires ou agrandir leur entreprise. C'est à ce moment qu'il est crucial de fournir des services de soutien et des possibilités de perfectionnement, afin que les entrepreneurs en herbe optimisent leurs chances de réussite. Les Centres universitaires d'aide aux entreprises (CUAE) sont un bon exemple de ce type de soutien.

Les CUAE sont des instruments uniques en leur genre qui facilitent l'entrepreneuriat et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires. La collectivité locale, l'université et la population étudiante participent à l'établissement d'une culture plus dynamique de l'entrepreneuriat. Les CUAE offrent aux entrepreneurs et propriétaires d'entreprise actuels et futurs des services d'orientation et de consultation à bon marché dans les collectivités servies. Ils offrent aussi aux étudiants l'occasion de travailler avec des entrepreneurs et des entreprises. Les CUAE réalisent aussi divers projets d'entrepreneuriat, de développement économique et de perfectionnement des compétences.

Le Nouvelle-Écosse compte cinq CUAE qui bénéficient du soutien de l'APÉCA : à l'Université Acadia, à l'Université Mount Saint Vincent, à l'Université St. Francis Xavier, à l'Université Saint Mary's ainsi qu'à l'Université Sainte-Anne.

« Nous sommes beaucoup plus prudents avec nos gains que lorsque nous recevions de l'argent de papa et maman. »
Jordan Stelson (10 ans) et sa soeur Michelle (8 ans), deux entrepreneurs de Freetown (L.-P.-É.) qui ont exploité leur propre élevage de porcs en 2002 dans le cadre du programme

Depuis 1998, le programme attire en moyenne 330 participants par année, et environ 220 étudiants se lancent en affaires chaque été. En 2002, il y a eu 460 participants et plus de 300 emplois d'été. Le programme jeunes entrepreneurs est le fruit d'un partenariat entre l'APÉCA et l'Association provinciale des CBD, la Banque de développement du Canada, le Centre de développement économique régional Red Ochre, Nortip Inc., le Conseil de l'Éducation et de l'Industrie, du Commerce et du Développement rural.

« Je veux devenir millionnaire »

Pour que le plus grand nombre de jeunes possible puissent reconnaître et exploiter les occasions d'affaires qui se présentent, il importe de leur donner des possibilités d'apprendre l'entrepreneuriat dans un cadre stimulant et agréable. La sensibilisation précocement contribue aussi à éviter la situation malheureusement trop répandue où les jeunes, ne voyant d'autres recours, émigrent dans les grandes villes à la recherche d'un emploi. Ce phénomène préoccupe particulièrement les régions rurales et les petits villages qui constituent les provinces à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, le programme *I Want to be a Millionaire* vise les élèves de 8 à 16 ans et leur donne la possibilité pratique de créer et d'exploiter une petite entreprise pendant les mois d'été.

De janvier 1998 à août 2002, les cinq CUAE ont conseillé plus de 4 500 clients, contribuant à la création et à la préservation de quelque 800 entreprises ainsi qu'à la création de plus de 1 200 emplois durables à temps plein. De plus, la participation des étudiants a augmenté, tout comme les contacts avec l'entrepreneuriat dans le cadre de ces activités. Au cours de l'année universitaire 1998-1999, 400 étudiants avaient reçu des conseils dans ce domaine.

Dans les cinq dernières années, l'initiative a permis à 410 élèves de créer leur propre entreprise d'été.

« Les CUAE établissent des liens mutuellement bénéfiques entre l'université et le milieu des affaires. Il en résulte un esprit d'entrepreneur entre ces deux secteurs et la possibilité de commercialiser l'innovation. »
Chris Pelham, directeur du Centre de la petite entreprise et de l'entrepreneuriat de l'Université Acadia

l'entrepreneuriat de la partie la plus populaire de l'émission et suscite toujours de nombreux courriels et commentaires chez les jeunes téléspectateurs. Comme les jeunes de l'Atlantique représentent plus de 21 % de l'audience nationale de *Street Cents*, on comprend aisément l'influence exercée par ce genre de modèle. Pour l'émission *Street Cents*, l'APÉCA travaillait en partenariat avec la CBC (Atlantique), qui agissait à titre de promoteur du projet, ainsi qu'avec le RESCOL d'Industrie Canada, la Commission canadienne des valeurs mobilières, la Counselling Foundation of Canada et l'Institut d'assurance du Canada. Pour le programme de vignettes sur les entrepreneurs francophones, les partenaires de l'Agence étaient le Centre d'Assomption de recherche et de développement en entrepreneuriat de l'Université de Moncton, Développement des ressources humaines Canada et Television Ilée, une maison de production privée.

Pour instaurer une culture axée sur l'entrepreneuriat, il ne faut pas se contenter de faire connaître cette possibilité de carrière. Une fois l'intérêt suscité, il importe de fournir aux jeunes des possibilités d'explorer sous un angle concret et pratique le démarrage d'une nouvelle entreprise. Autrement dit, il faut tôt ou tard passer de la parole aux actes.

Le programme Jeunes entrepreneurs vise à faire connaître l'entrepreneuriat aux jeunes de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador et à établir des liens plus étroits entre le système d'éducation et le milieu des affaires. Le programme, exécuté par l'association provinciale des corporations de développement communautaire (CBDC), aide les jeunes à se lancer en affaires pendant les mois d'été, en leur donnant accès à des services de consultation et en les aidant à élaborer un plan d'exploitation. Mis au point à St. Anthony, le programme est du Canada.

« Le programme Jeunes entrepreneurs m'a aidé à devenir plus indépendant et m'a enseigné les rapports avec le public. »

Roland Reid, Moose Design T-Shirts, Rocky Harbour, T.-N.-L.

« Le programme peut vous aider à faire preuve de créativité dans une entreprise. »

Chelsea Howard, Dorset Spirit Stones, Baie Verte, T.-N.-L.

Avec l'encouragement et le soutien de l'Agence, on a constitué le Comité des collèges de l'Atlantique pour le développement entrepreneurial (CCADE) en 1996, afin de fournir des ressources aux instructeurs, de favoriser leur perfectionnement professionnel dans le domaine de l'entrepreneuriat et de lancer des initiatives communautaires pertinentes dans les collèges. Ainsi, 467 instructeurs de collège ont acquis les compétences requises pour créer un milieu d'apprentissage axé sur l'entrepreneuriat.

Sensibilisation et information

La recherche a montré que les jeunes Canadiens de l'Atlantique réagissent à l'avantage de la présence de modèles à imiter et comprennent ainsi mieux comment ils peuvent façonner leur propre avenir en se lançant en affaires. Les jeunes ont tendance à s'inspirer de leurs pairs et de leur milieu quand ils prennent des décisions sur ce qu'ils considèrent comme les options de la vie.

Dans cette optique, l'APÉCA a soutenu l'élaboration de deux initiatives complémentaires consacrées à des productions télévisées sur l'entrepreneuriat. La série télévisée *Street Cents*, diffusée sur le réseau anglais de Radio-Canada (CBC), présente le profil de jeunes entrepreneurs des provinces de l'Atlantique. L'autre comprend la production et la diffusion à Radio-Canada de vignettes sur de jeunes entrepreneurs francophones de la région de l'Atlantique. Dans les deux cas, une utilisation stratégique d'Internet complète le temps d'antenne.

Ces deux initiatives ont des composantes pédagogiques, y compris des visites aux écoles et collèges pour promouvoir l'entrepreneuriat comme choix de carrière et la conception de ressources à l'usage des enseignants. Des milliers de jeunes de la région, ainsi que leurs parents et enseignants, ont déjà été exposés à des messages positifs et réalistes sur la nature et les exigences du métier d'entrepreneur.

Il est encourageant de voir la réaction des jeunes Canadiens de la région qui voient leurs pairs devenir entrepreneurs. Par exemple, le segment consacré à



RENFORCER LA CULTURE D'ENTREPRENEURSHIP DANS LA RÉGION DE L'ATLANTIQUE

L'investissement de l'APFCA dans le développement de l'entrepreneurs est surtout axé sur une intervention dans le système d'éducation, sur des activités de sensibilisation et sur les étapes pratiques qui permettent aux petites entreprises d'acquies les compétences indispensables à la survie et à la croissance. Voici quelques exemples des investissements faits par l'APFCA de 1998 à 2003 au titre de cette priorité stratégique.

Éducation en matière d'entrepreneurs

Pour favoriser la culture d'entrepreneurs, il importe de faire connaître très tôt aux jeunes le concept d'entrepreneurs, à l'âge où ils forment leurs attitudes, acquies des compétences et choisissent un métier. L'Agence a donc lancé plusieurs initiatives pour sensibiliser les élèves de tous les niveaux à cette possibilité de carrière.

Grâce à plusieurs projets lancés de concert avec la Fondation d'éducation des provinces atlantiques, qui représente les quatre ministères provinciaux de l'éducation, l'APFCA s'est employée à enrichir les ressources pédagogiques en entrepreneurs et à investir dans la formation connexe des enseignants. Les ministères provinciaux de l'éducation estimaient que chaque année, 250 000 élèves du réseau d'écoles publiques de l'Atlantique (soit plus de 60 % de la clientèle totale) avaient l'occasion de prendre connaissance des valeurs et des concepts de l'entrepreneurs en classe.

- L'Initiative Femmes en affaires (IFA) vise à améliorer la croissance et la compétitivité des entreprises appartenant à des femmes et à accroître leur présence dans les nouveaux secteurs en expansion de l'Atlantique. À cette fin, l'APFCA cherche surtout à renforcer les capacités de gestion et les compétences en affaires des femmes propriétaires d'entreprises, à leur donner un meilleur accès aux capitaux et aux services de soutien aux entreprises ainsi qu'à augmenter le nombre de femmes qui exploitent des entreprises exportatrices ou des entreprises axées sur le savoir.

- L'Initiative pour jeunes entrepreneurs (IJE) a pour but de fournir à un plus grand nombre de jeunes Canadiens de la région de l'Atlantique les moyens d'acquies les attitudes et les compétences en affaires nécessaires au lancement et à l'expansion d'entreprises prospères. Les futurs entrepreneurs auront ainsi de nouveaux moyens de réaliser leurs aspirations, tandis que les entrepreneurs actuels pourront acquies le savoir-faire dont ils ont besoin pour survivre en affaires et pour intensifier leurs activités.

« Le CCAD accorde une grande importance à la coopération entre les collèges et les divers ordres de gouvernement. Les instructeurs et les étudiants en retirent un avantage parce qu'ils connaissent mieux l'entrepreneurs et ses manifestations pratiques en classe. »

Annette St-Onge, directrice, CCAD



APERÇU

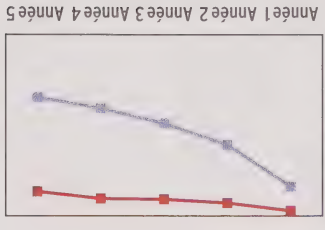
Pour stimuler l'emploi et améliorer les perspectives économiques dans les provinces de l'Atlantique, il faut essentiellement augmenter le nombre d'entrepreneurs.

Il est largement reconnu que les PME sont au cœur de l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique. Toutefois, l'emploi du terme technique « PME » tend à masquer le fait que ces entrepreneurs sont avant tout des êtres humains – des hommes et des femmes, nos voisins, des membres de nos collectivités – qui créent ou qui développent des entreprises, qui créent de l'emploi pour eux-mêmes et pour d'autres travailleurs.

Pour stimuler l'emploi et améliorer les perspectives économiques dans les provinces de l'Atlantique, il faut essentiellement augmenter le nombre d'entrepreneurs et les aider à parfaire leurs compétences. Tels sont la stratégie et l'objectif à long terme de l'Agence, qui reconnaît que, pour être un exportateur ou un innovateur, il faut d'abord être un bon entrepreneur.

C'est pourquoi l'APFCA a fait de l'entrepreneurship et du perfectionnement des compétences en affaires une priorité

Figure 7
Taux de survie de toutes les nouvelles entreprises
Toutes les industries
Pourcentage annuel de survie
(Pourcentage)



Source : Base de données sur la dynamique de l'emploi de Statistique Canada



stratégique. Elle veut aider les Canadiens de la région à acquérir la motivation et les compétences nécessaires pour lancer et développer leur propre entreprise. La figure 7 illustre le taux de survie des nouvelles entreprises. Sur cinq ans, le taux de survie des entreprises ayant bénéficié d'une aide de l'APFCA est deux fois et demie plus élevé que celui des autres.

Le profil de survie est sensiblement le même dans tous les secteurs, mais les petites entreprises (moins de 20 employés) tirent un plus grand avantage de l'aide de l'APFCA. L'Agence sait fort bien que des instruments judicieux et un climat d'affaires propice facilitent la croissance de l'entrepreneurship et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires. En général, les aspirants entrepreneurs ont bénéficié d'une formation, de modèles à imiter et de possibilités d'apprentissage qui leur permettent d'acquérir la motivation, les compétences et les compétences nécessaires à la création de leur entreprise. Tel est le genre d'expériences et de possibilités que l'APFCA cherche à offrir et à soutenir.

Par le passé, la démarche adoptée par l'APFCA a permis de valoriser l'entrepreneurship comme option de carrière viable, surtout chez les jeunes. L'Agence intervenait donc à tous les niveaux du système d'éducation tout en exhortant diverses activités de sensibilisation et de promotion, en vue d'accroître le bassin de candidats intéressés par une carrière d'entrepreneur.

Depuis cinq ans, l'approche de l'APFCA évolue en fonction de l'expérience acquise, des résultats des recherches menées et des commentaires formulés par les clients. Sans pour autant délaisser la sensibilisation et la promotion, l'Agence offre maintenant un solide programme de perfectionnement des compétences en affaires. La récente mise en œuvre du Partenariat pour l'entrepreneurship et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires (PEPCA) témoigne de l'évolution de cette stratégie. Cette composante du Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique (PTCA), d'une valeur de 59,6 millions de dollars, comprend trois volets :

- L'Initiative de développement des compétences en innovation (IDCI) permettra aux PME de former ou d'embaucher des employés compétents pour se développer dans l'économie mondiale du savoir. Ce programme mise sur l'innovation, la recherche-développement ainsi que la commercialisation et l'adoption de technologies de pointe.

L'Atlantique. Le centre, une installation de tout premier ordre sera construit sur le campus de l'Université de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. Le budget fédéral de 2003 prévoyait l'octroi de fonds au NRC pour qu'il puisse aménager ce nouveau centre d'innovation à Charlottetown.

**« L'institut d'innovation en
bioremises deviendra la pierre
angulaire des grappes de recherche
dans ce domaine en Atlantique. »**
Extrait de A Plan to Establish an Institute
for Bioresource Innovation,
Université de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, septembre 2002

Adaptation économique, région de Restigouche-Chaleur, Nouveau-Brunswick

En 2000-2001, la société Noranda annonçait la réduction progressive des activités de la mine Brunswick au cours des cinq à sept années suivantes. Important moteur de l'économie du Nord-Est du Nouveau-Brunswick, cette mine contribuait pour 126,3 millions de dollars par an au PIB, et il est estimé qu'elle crée plus de 3 400 emplois directs et indirects dans la province. Les effets de cette fermeture se feront surtout sentir dans les régions de Restigouche et Chaleur, où le taux de chômage oscille déjà autour de 20 %. La fondrière Noranda de Bellefleur, qui obtient environ 55 % de sa matière première de la mine, risque elle aussi de devoir faire l'objet d'une rationalisation par suite de la fermeture.

Comme suite à cette annonce, l'APBCA a entrepris, en collaboration avec d'autres organismes locaux de développement économique des collectivités, une analyse approfondie des répercussions de cette fermeture sur l'économie de la région, afin d'aider les PME à se préparer aux changements à venir. L'APBCA et ses partenaires ont pu cerner les incidences directes et indirectes de la fermeture de la mine, puis dresser un plan d'action ciblant 60 entreprises touchées de la région Restigouche-Chaleur. Ce plan prévoit l'affectation d'agents de développement économique qui travailleront directement avec les entreprises touchées afin d'effectuer des diagnostics, de les aider à élaborer des plans d'exploitation et de leur fournir des services d'encadrement. L'APBCA veut ainsi aider ces entreprises à diversifier leurs activités en les recentrant autour de nouveaux clients et de nouveaux marchés.

L'APBCA en tant que plaque tournante

Les projets gouvernementaux rendent de plus en plus floues les lignes de démarcation entre ministères. L'Agence a un rôle clé à jouer à cet égard en appuyant les politiques et les programmes horizontaux du gouvernement du Canada, y compris les projets interministériels découplant du discours du Trône et du budget fédéral. L'APBCA agit comme « plaque tournante régionale » parce qu'elle peut servir d'agent pour l'exécution d'une gamme variée de mesures fédérales dans la région de l'Atlantique. Pour s'acquitter de cette tâche, cependant, elle doit créer des partenariats avec d'autres ministères fédéraux, avec les gouvernements provinciaux, avec les municipalités, avec les universités et avec le secteur privé. Elle assume ce rôle politiques que pendant la prestation de services et l'exécution programmes au nom d'autres ministères et organismes.

À titre d'exemple de programme exécuté au nom de partenaires, on peut citer les travaux d'infrastructure. Ces projets font partie intégrante du programme fédéral depuis le début des années 1990, et ils visent principalement à améliorer l'infrastructure municipale grâce à l'octroi de fonds selon des régimes de partage des frais. En vertu des ententes négociées avec chaque province, l'APBCA reçoit et évalue les propositions au nom du gouvernement fédéral. Le programme actuel prévoit des projets en faveur de l'environnement par des investissements dans l'infrastructure « verte » des municipalités (systèmes d'élimination des eaux usées et des déchets solides).

En sa qualité d'intermédiaire régional, l'Agence a également négocié des accords et des protocoles d'entente avec d'autres ministères fédéraux, dont certains renferment des dispositions pour l'octroi de fonds. L'entente de dix millions de dollars conclue avec l'entente de dix millions de dollars conclue avec l'APBCA. Par ailleurs, le Canada en est un bon exemple : l'APBCA coordonne pour le compte du ministère la conception et la réalisation d'un certain nombre de projets à caractère patrimonial dans la région de l'Atlantique. Les dispositions de ce genre permettent à l'APBCA de tirer parti des volets économiques du mandat d'autres ministères pour mettre en commun et centrer plus efficacement les efforts que déploie le gouvernement fédéral dans la région de l'Atlantique.

ressources à Happy Valley-Goose Bay, coordonne sur place les initiatives de développement économique des Autochtones qui découlent du projet de la baie Voisey. L'APBCA accorde aussi son appui à un centre de développement des entreprises inuites et, par l'intermédiaire du programme de développement des entreprises (PDE), a contribué sociétés minières et entreprises autochtones qui a eu lieu à Labrador City en mai 2002.

Forum sur les enjeux de gestion dans le secteur public en Nouvelle-Écosse

Le Forum sur les enjeux de gestion dans le secteur public, qui a lieu deux fois l'an, représente une composante clé du travail d'élaboration de politiques et de coordination de l'APBCA en Nouvelle-Écosse. Cette tribune permet des discussions et des échanges sur des enjeux qui revêtent une importance clé pour les partenaires du secteur public. Les deux séances qui ont eu lieu jusqu'à présent traitaient respectivement du rôle de la fonction publique dans l'économie numérique et des incidences des changements démographiques sur les politiques et la gestion. Le prochain forum sera consacré au programme urbain de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Le Forum sur les enjeux de gestion dans la fonction publique a produit les résultats suivants :

- Les participants comprennent désormais mieux les principaux enjeux de gestion auxquels doit faire face la fonction publique, à l'échelon fédéral comme à l'échelon provincial.
- Le milieu universitaire est mieux sensibilisé au programme du gouvernement fédéral et du gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Écosse.
- Les hauts fonctionnaires et les gestionnaires fédéraux et provinciaux ont constitué un réseau informel de décideurs avec les universitaires de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

« Ce forum a permis aux universitaires et aux hauts fonctionnaires et aux gestionnaires fédéraux et provinciaux de la Nouvelle-Écosse d'agrandir leur réseau stratégique. »

M. Herman Bakvis,
directeur de l'école d'administration publique de l'Université Dalhousie

Vision et plan pour l'innovation dans le domaine des bioressources à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard

Dans le cadre du PICA, il est prévu que le Centre national de recherches du Canada (CNRC) investira 110 millions de dollars dans la réfection de ses installations actuelles et dans de nouveaux instituts de recherche-développement et dans des séminaires un peu partout dans la région de l'Atlantique. En prévision de cet apport de fonds, un groupe d'intervenants composé de représentants d'organismes et du public de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard a été créé en partenariat avec le CNRC afin de créer un centre de recherche en bioressources.

À l'appui de cet effort, le bureau régional de l'APBCA à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard a entrepris, de concert avec le gouvernement provincial et le CNRC, l'élaboration d'un plan technologique afin d'exposer les conditions essentielles à la création d'une grappe de recherche en bioressources à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. Après avoir envisagé près de cent secteurs possibles et effectué une analyse détaillée de dix secteurs d'intérêt particulier, il a été conclu que les industries de l'agriculture et des sciences de la mer seraient les mieux placées pour servir d'assise à la création d'une grappe fondée sur le savoir. Il a également été établi qu'un éventuel centre de recherche situé à l'Île devrait idéalement se concentrer sur les composés bioactifs.

- L'APBCA participe plus activement à l'élaboration et à la mise en œuvre des politiques publiques en Nouvelle-Écosse.
- Les participants perçoivent davantage l'APBCA comme un chef de file des politiques de développement économique en Nouvelle-Écosse.
- Ce forum a donné lieu à des recherches dans le domaine énergétique en collaboration avec le ministère de l'Énergie de la Nouvelle-Écosse et d'autres ministères.

En septembre 2002, les partenaires du projet ont publié un plan d'exploitation intitulé *A Plan to Establish an Institute for Bioresource Innovation* ainsi qu'un document de conception des installations. La proposition mise en avant fait de l'institut d'innovation en bioressources la clé de voûte d'une grappe de recherche en bioressources dans la région de

la réforme de la réglementation sur les valeurs mobilières, l'accès aux capitaux et l'évolution des relations fédérales-provinciales.

ACTIVITÉS RÉGIONALES

Les politiques, la défense des intérêts et la coordination représentent une priorité stratégique que se partagent toutes les divisions de l'Agence. Chacun des bureaux régionaux contribue à faire progresser le programme de l'APBCA. Dans les paragraphes qui suivent, le lecteur trouvera la description d'un ensemble choisi d'activités régionales entreprises pendant la période de 1998 à 2003.

Exploitation du nickel de la baie Voisey,

Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador

Le bureau régional de l'APBCA à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador appuie de différentes manières le projet de mise en valeur des gisements de nickel de la baie Voisey : défense des intérêts et coordination, promotion des fournisseurs, développement économique des Autochtones, identification de débouchés économiques et soutien à la technologie et à l'innovation dans le secteur minier.

L'APBCA s'est fait le défenseur du projet en appuyant sa mise en branle. De plus, elle coordonne le Comité fédéral interministériel de coordination qui a été créé pour superviser la gestion de la contribution maximale de 150 millions de dollars consentie par le gouvernement fédéral à l'appui de la recherche-développement, de la technologie ainsi que de la formation et du perfectionnement des compétences des Autochtones. À l'heure actuelle, l'APBCA travaille de concert avec le gouvernement provincial, la société Inco (promoteur privé du projet de la baie Voisey) et d'autres intervenants de l'industrie à la recherche de débouchés et à la promotion de fournisseurs. Plusieurs recherches ont été entreprises à l'appui du projet, dont certaines sont en cours et d'autres sont déjà terminées. Citons notamment une étude sur le cyber-approvisionnement et la promotion des fournisseurs dans l'industrie minière (avril 2002), une étude sur les débouchés en aval de la transformation du nickel à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (juillet 2002) et une étude sur l'impact macroéconomique des grands projets (mars 2003).

Pour favoriser le développement économique des Autochtones, l'APBCA a participé à la mise sur pied d'un groupe de travail auquel elle siège avec des représentants d'Entreprise autochtone Canada, d'Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada et de Développement des ressources humaines Canada. Ce groupe de travail, qui dispose de

l'entrepreneuriat autochtone, l'exploitation pétrolière et gazière, le commerce et les investissements. Elle travaille en étroite collaboration avec des ministères tels qu'Industrie Canada, le Conseil national de recherches du Canada, Ressources naturelles Canada, Pêches et Océans Canada et Parimoine canadien afin de cerner des possibilités de partenariat et de coopération dans des domaines précis qui présentent un intérêt stratégique pour la région. De plus, l'APBCA entretient depuis peu des rapports avec Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada en vue de surmonter les défis démographiques propres à la région de l'Atlantique, compte tenu des liens qui existent entre l'immigration et le développement économique.

La défense des intérêts suppose des démarches et des décisions stratégiques et tactiques qui nécessitent une planification rigoureuse, étayée par des recherches solides, des réseaux bien établis et des partenariats avec les principaux intervenants. Par son travail de défense des intérêts, l'APBCA tient le ministre et les hauts fonctionnaires au courant des incidences des priorités et des activités gouvernementales. Elle veille également à ce que le ministre et les intervenants de l'intérieur et de l'extérieur aient accès à l'information dont ils ont besoin pour faire des interventions judicieuses et efficaces et que les priorités stratégiques nationales contribuent à renforcer les capacités de la région.

COORDINATION

L'APBCA préside les conseils régionaux des hauts fonctionnaires fédéraux de chaque province, ce qui lui permet de coordonner à l'échelle provinciale les politiques, les activités et les programmes des ministères et des organismes fédéraux. Ces conseils sont composés de hauts fonctionnaires de tous les ministères fédéraux qui ont des bureaux dans la région de l'Atlantique.

L'APBCA a également mis sur pied un comité d'harmonisation fédéral-provincial pour aider à coordonner ses propres activités de développement économique et celles des ministères provinciaux responsables du développement économique et des affaires intergouvernementales. C'est le président de l'APBCA qui est à la tête de ce comité. Y siègent également des sous-ministres de chaque province, le vice-président des Politiques et des Programmes de l'APBCA ainsi que les vice-présidents régionaux de l'APBCA.

Le comité d'harmonisation discute de sujets très variés, dont l'immigration dans les provinces de l'Atlantique, le rôle des services actifs dans le développement régional, l'innovation, les priorités au chapitre de l'infrastructure,

et à ce qu'ils favorisent la croissance économique de la région; d'autre part, elle s'emploie à maximiser les retombées industrielles régionales des marchés publics fédéraux en facilitant la circulation de l'information et en améliorant les possibilités d'accès, de façon à renforcer les capacités des entreprises de l'Atlantique.

Par son travail de défense des intérêts, l'APFCA cherche surtout à influencer les processus décisionnels nationaux de façon proactive et réactive. Pour atteindre cet objectif, elle doit faire en sorte que les décideurs disposent de renseignements à jour sur les priorités, les forces et les préoccupations de la région. L'Agence veille donc à ce que l'information circule dans les deux sens, particulièrement lorsqu'il est question d'enjeux liés aux priorités stratégiques de la région. Du même coup, l'APFCA doit pouvoir réagir à des priorités nouvelles ou naissantes et s'adapter rapidement et sans heurt aux nouveaux enjeux, qui suscitent, à titre d'exemples de priorités nouvelles, on peut citer le développement économique des Autochtones, l'immigration, la politique rurale, l'aquaculture, l'exploitation pétrolière et gazière et le changement climatique, sans compter plusieurs dossiers

L'APFCA collabore avec d'autres ministères fédéraux, les provinces et les municipalités dans le but d'officialiser les relations de travail établies dans une gamme variée de dossiers, dont le transport, l'aquaculture, l'innovation, un service de qualité.

Cette activité est disséminée un peu partout dans les quatre provinces, et l'APFCA continue de travailler avec les principaux entrepreneurs afin de cerner des débouchés et de promouvoir les fournisseurs de l'Atlantique qui offrent d'équipement aérospatial, la remise à neuf de véhicules terrestres et lesoutils interne à l'industrie aérospatiale. Pour l'industrie aérospatiale, la révision et la réparation de contrats de développement, des contrats de développement de recherche et de sauvetage, des contrats de développement de travaux à l'appui de projets tels que des hélicoptères de 500 millions de dollars en Atlantique. Cela comprend des à la conclusion de contrats d'une valeur de quelque retombées économiques pour l'industrie ont donné lieu les efforts déployés par l'APFCA afin de créer des Au cours de la période quinquennale de 1998 à 2003, d'usines de bois d'œuvre et de zones de pêche.





interministériel composé de membres des trois agences régionales et d'un maximum de douze autres ministères et organismes, dont les organismes centraux.

De 2000 à 2001, le Comité des politiques du développement territorial a procédé à un examen des politiques de développement régional canadiennes. Depuis avril 2002, l'APÉCA siège au Comité à titre de délégué officiel; elle représente les intérêts du Canada et contribue à l'élaboration des politiques territoriales du Comité. En outre, les trois agences de développement régional ont été invitées à participer à l'examen des politiques d'autres pays à titre de pairs. Le Comité a invité l'APÉCA à prendre part à l'examen des politiques de la Suisse en 2001, tandis que les deux autres agences régionales ont participé à des examens semblables en Italie ainsi qu'au projet de la région de l'Oresund, au Danemark et en Suède. Cette tribune internationale représente pour l'APÉCA une excellence occasion d'étudier et d'évaluer les efforts déployés dans d'autres régions du monde pour stimuler le développement.

DÉFENSE DES INTÉRÊTS

La défense des intérêts veille à ce que les politiques et les programmes socioéconomiques fédéraux soient inclusifs et équilibrés, et à ce qu'ils favorisent la croissance économique de la région.

Entre autres fonctions essentielles, l'APÉCA doit, pour s'acquitter de son mandat, défendre les intérêts de l'Atlantique dans l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre des politiques, des programmes et des projets économiques nationaux. Cette fonction est dirigée à l'échelle de l'Agence tout entière par le ministre d'État. L'APÉCA élabore, coordonne et gère son programme général de défense des intérêts en veillant à ce que les priorités nationales répondent aux besoins de la région et à ce que les autres ministères fédéraux tiennent compte de la position, leurs politiques.

L'APÉCA concentre ses efforts sur deux fronts : d'une part, elle veille à ce que les politiques et les programmes socioéconomiques fédéraux soient inclusifs et équilibrés

Les participants à la conférence sont parvenus à plusieurs conclusions générales. Premièrement, la demande de travailleurs hautement spécialisés augmente à mesure que l'application et l'acquisition du savoir deviennent la force motrice de nouveaux procédés et de nouvelles entreprises dans les économies industrialisées. Deuxièmement, l'économie fondée sur le savoir exige à la fois des compétences techniques et des compétences non techniques, dont la communication, la créativité, le raisonnement analytique, la facilité d'adaptation et le jugement. Troisièmement, le Canada n'aura à moyen terme aucun problème à trouver des travailleurs spécialisés, même s'il pourrait subir des pénuries à court terme dans certains secteurs d'activité et certaines régions. Quatrièmement, l'écart se creuse entre les « nantis du savoir » et les « démunis du savoir » l'activité des groupes sous-représentés dans l'économie du savoir. Cinquièmement, la région de l'Atlantique est davantage confrontée à la menace de l'écart salarial qu'à une lacune au niveau des compétences, de nombreuses entreprises de la région refusant ou étant incapables de payer des indemnités concurrentielles pour obtenir et retenir des travailleurs spécialisés. Finalement, l'apprentissage continu fait partie intégrante du perfectionnement des compétences.

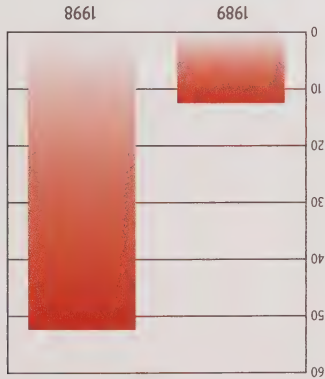
Le lecteur trouvera un résumé de cette conférence internationale sur le site Web de l'APÉCA à l'adresse suivante : http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/ibrary/reports/skills_development.shtml

Examen mené par le Comité des politiques du développement territorial de l'OCDE

À titre de membre de l'Organisation pour la coopération et le développement économiques (OCDE), le Canada siège au Comité des politiques du développement territorial, qui se veut pour les gouvernements une tribune de discussion sur la capacité des économies locales et régionales de s'adapter et d'exploiter les possibilités de développement qui s'offrent à elles. Le Comité s'emploie surtout à examiner les politiques de développement territorial des pays membres de l'OCDE, à évaluer leur impact à l'échelle régionale et à cerner les tendances et les pratiques exemplaires.

Depuis la création du Comité des politiques du développement territorial, le Canada y est représenté alternativement par l'une de ses trois agences de développement régional (Développement économique Canada pour les régions du Québec, Diversification de l'économie de l'Ouest Canada et l'APÉCA). La délégation canadienne peut compter sur l'appui d'un comité

Figure 6
Clients de l'APÉCA – Salaires versés
en aquiculture
(en millions de dollars)



Source : Dynamique de l'emploi, Statistique Canada

mettre en place un programme efficace pour la protection

La stratégie de l'APÉCA est centrée sur quatre axes primaires : stimuler la croissance des grappes; répondre aux besoins urgents des entreprises; favoriser la diversification des espèces, des technologies et des marchés; et promouvoir de meilleurs régimes de réglementation et de soutien. À la lumière de ces quatre grands éléments stratégiques, l'Agence a dressé des plans d'action qui mettent l'accent sur le développement des entreprises, la recherche-développement, l'innovation et la défense des intérêts. Elle est résolue à continuer de travailler en étroite collaboration avec l'industrie aquicole de l'Atlantique afin de mettre en œuvre sa stratégie.

Conférence des partenaires « Développement des compétences dans une économie axée sur le savoir »
En 1999, l'APÉCA a organisé une conférence sur le perfectionnement des compétences dans l'économie du savoir en collaboration avec quatre partenaires : le Conseil économique des provinces de l'Atlantique, le Secrétariat de la recherche stratégique, Industrie Canada et Développement des ressources humaines Canada. La conférence a réuni des experts du perfectionnement des compétences et de l'économie du savoir venus des quatre coins du Canada, des États-Unis et de l'Europe. L'objectif consistait à examiner dans quelle mesure le marché du travail répondait à la demande de compétences axées sur l'innovation et la technologie.

Le saumon compte pour les trois quarts de cette valeur et pour environ la moitié du volume de production. L'aquiculture a aussi beaucoup contribué à la création d'emplois et à l'augmentation du produit intérieur brut (PIB).

L'APÉCA a fourni un soutien important pour répondre aux principaux besoins de l'industrie, notamment au chapitre du financement, du transfert de technologie, de l'expansion des marchés et de la formation. Les données de Statistique Canada révèlent que les salaires annuels versés par les entreprises aquicoles ayant reçu l'aide de l'APÉCA s'élevaient à 40 millions de dollars entre 1993 et 1998 (voir la figure 6).

De plus, l'APÉCA a entrepris diverses études sur les contraintes et les possibilités associées au développement de l'industrie. L'une de ces études, qui a été réalisée récemment, portait sur une stratégie de développement de l'aquiculture en Atlantique.

Cette étude devait permettre à l'APÉCA d'adopter une approche stratégique intégrée à l'appui du développement du secteur aquicole dans la région de l'Atlantique. Depuis sa création en 1987, l'Agence travaille d'arrache-pied afin d'établir des partenariats solides avec des aquiculteurs, des associations de l'industrie, le milieu de la recherche-développement en aquiculture et d'autres ministères. Elle a accordé un soutien à de nombreux producteurs et financé la réalisation d'un grand nombre de projets de recherche, l'élaboration de plusieurs stratégies provinciales et l'organisation d'une gamme variée de conférences et d'ateliers d'envergure locale, provinciale, régionale, nationale et mondiale. Il était donc opportun qu'elle se dote d'une stratégie intégrée afin d'aider l'industrie à réaliser pleinement son potentiel de croissance, à surmonter les défis qui l'attendent et à saisir les débouchés qui se présentent.

L'étude sectorielle de l'APÉCA sur le développement de l'aquiculture en Atlantique porte sur les défis associés à l'expansion des entreprises (tels que la concurrence mondiale, le manque de fonds de roulement et la valorisation locale); à la recherche-développement et à la technologie (tels que le manque de capitaux nécessaires à la recherche-développement, la disponibilité de chercheurs qualifiés et l'absence d'investissements du secteur privé) et au cadre stratégique et réglementaire fédéral et provincial (tels que l'accès à de nouveaux sites, les conflits entre les aquiculteurs et les coûts de location, les autres utilisateurs des plans d'eau et la nécessité de

isolées (parce qu'elles les rapprochent des marchés), elles ont en fait concentré dans les zones urbaines les emplois qui en découlent. En effet, du point de vue des régions rurales, la baisse des coûts de communication est neutralisée par l'incapacité de générer un volume d'affaires menant à une hausse de productivité. Autrement dit, la distance demeure un facteur, et les gestionnaires d'entreprise doivent encore se déplacer pour rencontrer leurs clients.

Dans la région de l'Atlantique et pour l'APBCA, cette étude pourrait avoir pour effet de changer la nature des programmes offerts aux régions isolées et aux régions rurales situées à proximité des centres urbains. Les auteurs ont produit en tout 17 rapports de fond, ainsi que le compte rendu d'un atelier de deux jours auquel ont participé des spécialistes de l'Écosse, de la Norvège, de la Suède et de la Finlande.

Études sur le processus d'innovation

Grâce à une série de projets de recherche, l'APBCA comprend désormais beaucoup mieux le processus d'innovation dans les provinces de l'Atlantique ainsi que les défis particuliers qui attendent la région à ce chapitre. En 2000, la Commission de l'enseignement supérieur des provinces Maritimes (CESPM) a publié trois rapports d'étude après s'être penchée sur l'intensité des activités de recherche-développement dans les universités de l'Atlantique. Les universités sont des intervenants importants dans le domaine de l'innovation et de la recherche-développement au Canada, et, même si les établissements d'enseignement postsecondaire de l'Atlantique reçoivent une bonne cote pour ce qui est du corps professoral et du rendement des étudiants, ils accusent un retard par rapport à ceux des autres régions du pays en ce qui a trait aux activités de recherche-

développement. Le concept du FIA s'inspire largement des conclusions énoncées dans les rapports de la CESPM.

L'APBCA a également pu tirer parti d'un autre projet de recherche de grande portée, à savoir une étude sur l'innovation et la commercialisation en Atlantique. Fruit de vastes consultations menées auprès de divers intervenants de la région, cette étude indique que, même si la région peut s'enorgueillir de certaines forces dans le domaine de l'innovation (en particulier les travaux de recherche-développement entrepris par les universités), il lui faudra adopter de nouvelles technologies et attirer d'importants investissements du secteur privé pour intensifier ses efforts dans ce domaine. L'étude laisse également entendre que la région de l'Atlantique ne pourra améliorer son rendement en innovation qu'à certaines conditions : investissements gouvernementaux et aide au renforcement des capacités, intensification de la recherche appliquée par les universités et adoption d'une vision commune de l'innovation par l'ensemble des intervenants concernés.

Ces études sont étroitement associées à la priorité stratégique Innovation de l'APBCA. En particulier, elles expliquent la façon dont les groupes de recherche de l'Atlantique peuvent commercialiser avec plus de succès de nouveaux produits et de nouveaux procédés.

Étude sur la stratégie en matière d'aquaculture

À l'échelle mondiale, le secteur aquicole a doublé la part du marché qu'il occupait en 1990, et le poisson d'élevage représente aujourd'hui plus d'un quart de la production totale de poisson. Dans la région de l'Atlantique, l'essor de ce secteur est encore plus spectaculaire, la valeur de la production aquicole étant passée de 97 millions de dollars en 1991 à 276 millions en 2000.



POLITIQUES, DÉFENSE DES INTÉRÊTS ET COORDINATION

APÉRÇU

La fonction « politiques » est axée sur le processus décisionnel de l'APÉCA. L'équipe qui y travaille s'acquitte de son rôle en faisant des recherches discrètes, en analysant régulièrement des enjeux et des tendances et en participant à des activités telles que des tables rondes et des conférences avec d'autres groupes et intervenants. L'APÉCA mène des recherches elle-même, mais elle finance aussi des projets entrepris par des partenaires du milieu de l'enseignement postsecondaire ou de la consultation de la région. La Mesure de recherche stratégique visant la région de l'Atlantique est un programme panatlantique doté d'un budget qui sert expressément à promouvoir le travail d'élaboration de politiques externes. L'APÉCA finance également des projets d'élaboration de politiques dans le cadre du Programme de développement des entreprises.

La fonction « défense des intérêts » vise deux grands objectifs : maximiser les retombées régionales des grands marchés publics fédéraux pour l'industrie et veiller à ce que les politiques et les programmes nationaux tiennent compte des intérêts de la région de l'Atlantique.

La fonction « coordination » comporte plusieurs facettes. L'équipe qui y travaille s'emploie surtout à coordonner le rôle des divers ministères fédéraux qui s'occupent du développement économique dans la région de l'Atlantique. Elle coordonne les activités fédérales et provinciales à l'échelle d'une province ou à l'échelle de la région tout entière, dans les secteurs où un enjeu donné suscite suffisamment d'intérêt. En outre, l'APÉCA préside les conseils régionaux des hauts fonctionnaires fédéraux de chaque province.

MESURE DE RECHERCHE STRATÉGIQUE VISANT LA RÉGION DE L'ATLANTIQUE

Programme pluriannuel, la Mesure de recherche stratégique visant la région de l'Atlantique permet de financer des recherches stratégiques destinées à faire la lumière sur l'économie de l'Atlantique et sur son évolution.

Les projets de recherche financés dans le cadre de cette initiative portent habituellement sur des aspects monographiques du système économique de l'Atlantique qui ont une portée stratégique. La Mesure de recherche stratégique vise à donner à l'APÉCA les outils nécessaires pour coordonner et planifier à l'échelle régionale des activités fédérales qui contribuent à la croissance

Étude sur les régions périphériques

Ces études témoignent de l'importance accordée aux priorités stratégiques de l'APÉCA, aux pratiques naissantes dans le domaine du développement régional ainsi qu'aux enjeux liés au développement dans les principaux secteurs économiques. Certains ont été coparrainés par des organismes tels que Développement économique Canada pour les régions du Québec et l'Institut de recherche stratégique. Les exemples qui suivent illustrent la portée et l'envergure des activités d'analyse et de recherche stratégiques entreprises par l'APÉCA.

Les recherches financées depuis 1998 grâce à ce programme et à d'autres sources portent sur une série de sujets directement liés au mandat de l'APÉCA. Le lecteur trouvera une liste partielle de publications de recherche dans le site Web de l'APÉCA à l'adresse <http://www.aeca-apcca.gc.ca/publication/f/5ans/1998-2003/apri.shtml>.

La Mesure de recherche stratégique visant la région de l'Atlantique réunit des universités, des instituts indépendants de recherche en politiques publiques, d'autres ministères, des associations d'entreprises, des experts-conseils et d'autres entreprises du secteur privé. Les partenaires de ce réseau peuvent vivre dans la région de l'Atlantique ou à l'extérieur, mais ils doivent posséder des connaissances spécialisées et une expérience qui sont pertinentes pour la région.

Portant le sous-titre *La dynamique spatiale de l'économie canadienne et l'avenir des régions non métropolitaines du Québec et des provinces de l'Atlantique*, cette étude a été menée par Développement économique Canada pour les régions du Québec. L'APÉCA a saisi l'occasion de la cofinancer et d'en étendre l'application à la région de l'Atlantique. Les auteurs ont affecté des chercheurs à Moncton et à Montréal. L'étude met en lumière les écarts constatés dans le rythme de développement des régions de l'Est du Canada qui se trouvent près des grands centres urbains et de celles qui en sont plus éloignées.

La recherche révèle que les citoyens se concentrent de plus en plus dans les grands centres urbains ou autour de ceux-ci, conclusion confirmée depuis par le Recensement de 2001. De plus, même si les technologies de l'information sont perçues libératrice dans les régions



FONDS D'INVESTISSEMENT STRATÉGIQUE DANS LES COLLECTIVITÉS

Le Fonds d'investissement stratégique dans les collectivités (FISC) est un programme de 135 millions de dollars qui permet à l'APÉCA de financer des projets stratégiques pour aider les collectivités à renforcer leur assise économique. Destiné principalement aux collectivités rurales, le FISC cible surtout les projets qui aident les collectivités à adopter de nouvelles technologies, à améliorer la compétitivité de leurs secteurs d'activité et à se doter des éléments d'infrastructure propres à leur développement économique.

Le programme incite les promoteurs – dirigeants communautaires, organismes de développement régional et membres de commerce, notamment – à entamer des discussions et à créer de nouveaux projets. Les organisations non commerciales et les organismes sans but lucratif y sont admissibles, comme les municipalités, les instituts de promotion des affaires ou de la technologie, les associations d'entreprises, les associations de développement économique, les universités et les autres établissements d'enseignement, les coopératives locales et diverses autres entités à vocation commerciale.

Au 31 mars 2003, 134 projets avaient été approuvés, et l'APÉCA avait accordé des contributions de 49 millions de dollars. Le coût total de ces projets s'élevait à 125,3 millions de dollars. En outre, 196 autres propositions étaient à l'étude.



PARTENARIAT POUR LE COMMERCE ET L'INVESTISSEMENT AU CANADA ATLANTIQUE

Le Partenariat pour le commerce et l'investissement au Canada atlantique (PCICA), qui est doté d'un budget de 64 millions de dollars, a été conçu pour accroître le rendement à l'exportation des provinces de l'Atlantique en aidant les PME à se lancer sur les marchés étrangers ou à y intensifier leurs activités, ainsi que pour attirer des investissements étrangers directs dans la région. Le PCICA compte six grands volets :

- missions d'équipe Canada Atlantique;
- stratégies d'exportation sectorielles;
- sensibilisation au commerce et perfectionnement des compétences;
- stages en exportation pour les diplômés des programmes de commerce;
- stratégie d'investissement de l'Atlantique;
- développement du tourisme.

Depuis l'annonce de la création du PCICA en mai 2002, l'APÉCA a accordé 9,2 millions de dollars aux promoteurs de 132 projets. Ces investissements ont incité d'autres partenaires à fournir une aide supplémentaire de 3,2 millions de dollars, ce qui donne lieu à un investissement total de plus de 12,4 millions de dollars.

PARTENARIAT POUR L'ENTREPRENEURSHIP ET LE PERFECTIONNEMENT DES COMPÉTENCES EN AFFAIRES

Le Partenariat pour l'entrepreneurship et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires a été créé dans le but d'inciter un plus grand nombre de Canadiens de l'Atlantique à se lancer en affaires ainsi que d'aider les entrepreneurs déjà en affaires à soutenir la concurrence et à prospérer. Voici les trois volets de ce programme :

- Initiative de développement des compétences en innovation;
- Initiative Femmes en affaires;
- Initiative pour jeunes entrepreneurs.

Depuis l'annonce de sa création en octobre 2002 jusqu'au 31 mars 2003, le Partenariat pour l'entrepreneurship et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires a permis à l'APÉCA d'accorder plus de 9 millions de dollars aux promoteurs de 125 projets. Cet investissement a eu un effet de levier de 4 millions de dollars, ce qui porte le total des sommes investies à plus de 13 millions de dollars.



engagé à investir 110 millions de dollars sur cinq ans afin d'agrandir et de consolider son réseau de centres de recherche en Atlantique. Même s'ils ont un mandat national, ces centres se concentrent sur certains secteurs technologiques précis qui présentent des possibilités d'investissement et de développement économique pour la région de l'Atlantique.

Au 31 mars, le CNRC a confirmé avoir investi dans des instituts de promotion du commerce électronique de Fredericton, de Moncton, de Saint John et de Miramichi (tous interreliés grâce à un réseau haute vitesse à large bande); dans le Groupe de recherche en technologie de l'information du Cap-Breton; dans l'Institut des biosciences marines et l'Institut du biodiagnostic de Halifax, ainsi que dans l'Institut de dynamique marine de St. John's. En outre, le CNRC étudie la possibilité de financer la création d'une installation de recherche en bioressources à Charlottetown.

Ces investissements sont considérés comme des éléments importants de l'infrastructure d'innovation, et ils sont nécessaires pour stimuler la croissance de grappes technologiques de pointe. Ces fonds visent à créer des liens entre les principaux intervenants et à attirer d'autres investissements dans de nouveaux débouchés en technologie et en recherche. Ils devraient également aider à retenir les travailleurs hautement spécialisés dans la région et favoriser la croissance d'entreprises concurrentielles sur les marchés mondiaux.

Le 29 juin 2000, le premier ministre du Canada et les quatre ministres fédéraux de la région de l'Atlantique ont annoncé la création du Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique (PICA). Assortie d'un budget de 700 millions de dollars, cette initiative quinquennale prévoit un ensemble de programmes et d'investissements stratégiques qui ont pour but de renforcer la capacité d'innovation des Canadiens de l'Atlantique et de les aider à soutenir la concurrence dans l'économie mondiale du savoir.

Le PICA repose sur une démarche intégrée et équilibrée qui vise en priorité à stimuler l'innovation, la mise au point de nouvelles technologies, le commerce, l'investissement, l'entrepreneuriat, le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires ainsi que le développement économique des régions rurales et des collectivités. Cette initiative panatlantique favorise la concertation entre les principaux intervenants : gouvernements, collectivités, entreprises, universités, collèges et établissements de recherche. L'APÉCA exécute la plupart des volets du PICA, et le Conseil national de recherches du Canada y joue également un rôle en consolidant son réseau de centres de recherche dans la région de l'Atlantique.

Voici les quatre grands volets du PICA :

PARTENARIAT POUR L'INNOVATION

Fonds d'innovation de l'Atlantique

Le Fonds d'innovation de l'Atlantique (FIA) permet à l'APÉCA de faire des investissements stratégiques dans des projets de recherche-développement de pointe qui contribuent directement à la création d'activités économiques axées sur la technologie. Le FIA est doté d'un budget de 300 millions de dollars échelonné sur cinq ans à compter de l'exercice 2001-2002.

Le FIA est assorti de plusieurs objectifs : stimuler l'activité dans les domaines de l'innovation et de la recherche-développement et accroître le potentiel de la région de l'Atlantique à cet égard; accroître la capacité de commercialisation des produits de la recherche-développement; maximiser les retombées des programmes nationaux de recherche-développement; et renforcer la capacité d'innovation de la région en favorisant la création d'alliances et de partenariats en commercialisation et en recherche-développement.

⁵ Le lecteur trouvera une liste des projets approuvés dans le cadre du PICA dans le site Web de l'APÉCA, à l'adresse <http://www.aecoa-apeca.gc.ca/publication/5ans/1998-2003/index.shtml>

Le FIA finance des propositions d'entités commerciales et des associations d'entreprises, des établissements de recherche et des entreprises du secteur privé. L'APÉCA encourage les promoteurs de projet à obtenir des fonds d'autres sources, notamment de programmes nationaux tels que la Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation, Partenariat technologique Canada, les conseils subventionnaires nationaux et le Programme d'aide à la recherche industrielle du Conseil national de recherches du Canada. Néanmoins, le FIA n'est pas une source de financement complémentaire automatique aux programmes nationaux.

Un conseil consultatif composé de dix membres nommés fait des recommandations aux ministres sur chacune des propositions reçues. À la lumière de ces recommandations, les ministres choisissent les projets qui seront financés par le FIA.

Au 31 mars 2003, deux demandes de propositions avaient été lancées dans le cadre du FIA. À l'issue de la première de ces demandes, l'APÉCA a reçu 195 propositions (75 projets commerciaux et 120 projets non commerciaux), évaluées à 1,5 milliard de dollars. Les fonds demandés s'élevaient collectivement à 810 millions de dollars. L'Agence a approuvé 47 projets, l'aide financière consentie totalisant 155 millions de dollars. La seconde demande de propositions a donné lieu à 174 propositions (80 projets commerciaux et 94 projets non commerciaux) d'une valeur totale d'un milliard de dollars. L'aide financière demandée se chiffrait à 545 millions de dollars. Les projets présents en réponse à la seconde demande de propositions étaient en cours d'évaluation au 31 mars 2003.

L'effet de levier prévu se monte à environ 185 millions de dollars, sommes qui proviendront d'universités et d'autres établissements de recherche (33 millions de dollars), des programmes nationaux (57 millions de dollars), des gouvernements provinciaux (5 millions de dollars) et du secteur privé (90 millions de dollars).

Conseil national de recherches du Canada

Dans le cadre du Partenariat pour l'innovation du FIA, le Conseil national de recherches du Canada (CNRC) s'est

REMOUBOUREMENT

Entre autres activités, l'APÉCA consent des prêts exemplifs d'intérêts à des PME pour les aider à démarrer, à prendre de l'expansion, à accroître leur productivité, à conquérir de nouveaux marchés, etc. Les modalités de remboursement introduites en 1995 dans le cadre du Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE) ont permis à l'APÉCA de réclamer le remboursement d'une plus grande proportion de l'aide financière accordée, ce qui a accru d'autant la valeur du portefeuille de prêts nécessitant une gestion serrée. Pour stimuler encore davantage les investissements dans les secteurs prioritaires, le gouvernement du Canada a habilité l'APÉCA à recourir aux contributions à remboursement conditionnel en août 1996. Ce type d'aide financière favorise le partage du risque entre l'APÉCA et le client, en ce sens que les modalités de remboursement dépendent du degré de réussite de l'entreprise. Le remboursement conditionnel s'applique aujourd'hui à des projets d'innovation, d'acquisition de technologies de pointe, d'expansion des marchés, d'intensification de l'activité commerciale ou de perfectionnement des compétences.

Au 31 mars 2003, le principal impayé du portefeuille de contributions remboursables s'élevait à 347,9 millions de dollars, ce qui comprend 5,3 millions de dollars issus de prêts à remboursement conditionnel, comme le montre la figure 3. Les prêts à remboursement conditionnel

Portefeuille des contributions remboursables - Au 31 mars 2003 (en millions de dollars)

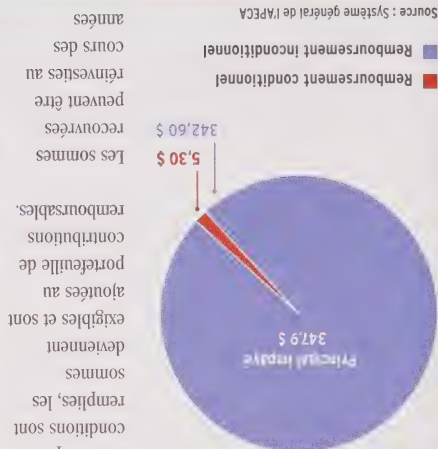


Figure 3

subséquentes.

Comme le montre la figure 4, le

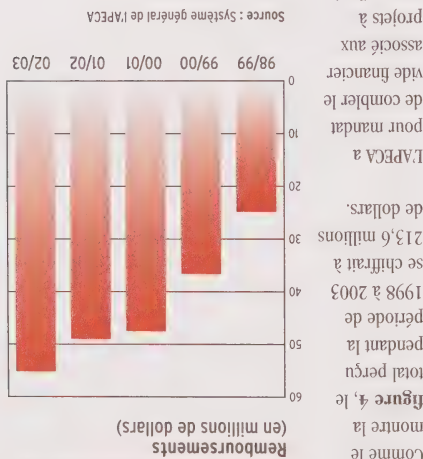


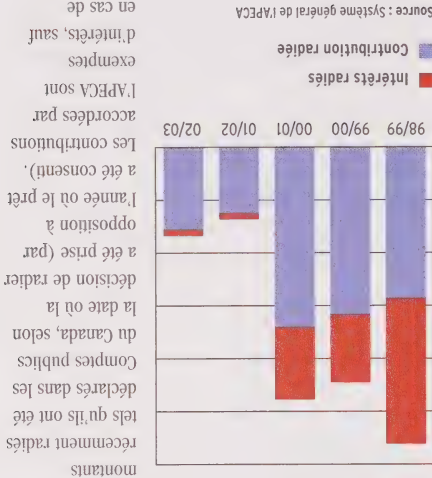
Figure 4

montre la figure 4, le

total perçu pendant la période de 1998 à 2003 se chiffrait à 213,6 millions de dollars. L'APÉCA a pour mandat de combler le vide financier associé aux projets à risque élevé, dans lesquels les prêteurs

Elle s'attend pleinement à se faire rembourser chacun des prêts qu'elle consent. Cependant, les affaires sont de par leur nature risquées, et, contrairement aux prêteurs traditionnels, l'APÉCA n'exige aucune garantie. Inévitablement, certains projets échouent et les prêts ne sont pas remboursés. Le cas échéant, le montant impayé est radié.

Radiations déclarées dans les Comptes publics (en millions de dollars)



La figure 5 illustre les montants récemment radiés tels qu'ils ont été déclarés dans les Comptes publics du Canada, selon la date où la décision de radier a été prise (par opposition à l'année où le prêt a été consenti). Les contributions accordées par l'APÉCA sont des exemples d'intérêts, sauf en cas de manquement à l'entente de remboursement.

Source : Système général de l'APÉCA

Source : Système général de l'APÉCA

Remboursement conditionnel

Remboursement inconditionnel

Les sommes

suivi et d'un examen régulier, et, à mesure que les conditions sont remplies, les sommes ajoutées au portefeuille de contributions remboursables.

Les sommes

peuvent être

reinvesties au

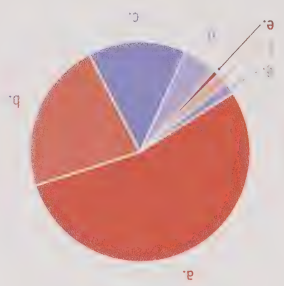
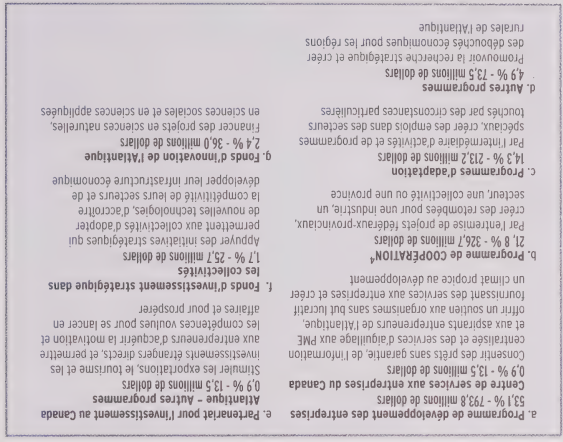
cours des

années

Les ententes bilatérales de développement économique ont expiré pendant la période visée par le présent rapport et n'ont pas été renouvelées.

La figure 2 illustre la ventilation des dépenses (comprend 85,1 millions de dollars pour le secteur d'activité Administration générale, mais exclut les dépenses législatifs) par programme de travaux d'infrastructure ainsi que les paiements de transfert consacrés à Infrastructures Canada et aux Programmes de

Source : Système général de l'APECA

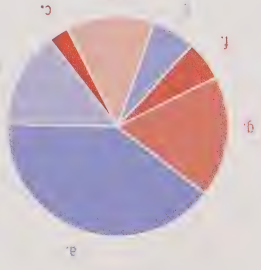
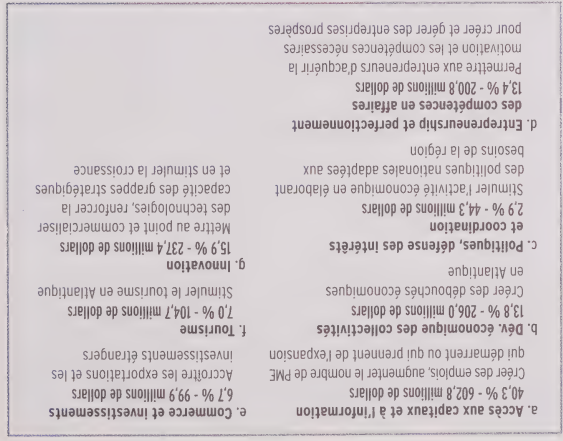


Total - 1,5 milliard de dollars

Dépenses par programme - Exercices 1998-1999 à 2002-2003

Figure 2

Source : Système général de l'APECA



Total - 1,5 milliard de dollars

Dépenses par priorité stratégique - Exercices 1998-1999 à 2002-2003

Figure 1



Partout dans les provinces de l'Atlantique, l'APÉCA a établi avec les collectivités autochtones des partenariats après la création de nouvelles perspectives économiques pour les Premières nations. Par exemple, au Nouveau-Brunswick, l'Initiative conjointe de développement économique est le fruit d'un partenariat permanent avec les Autochtones et une gamme d'intervenants des secteurs public et privé qui travaillent à créer des possibilités de développement précises dans des domaines comme la formation et l'emploi.

En collaboration avec les universités et les établissements de recherche, l'Agence joue un rôle de chef de file dans la création du programme d'innovation de la région. Elle a également établi un partenariat avec les universités de l'Atlantique pour ce qui est de leur participation aux programmes nationaux de la Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation, du Conseil national de recherches du Canada, du Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie et de Genome Canada. De façon plus générale, ce partenariat permet à la région de l'Atlantique de participer plus activement à la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie d'innovation du Canada.

Dans ses rapports avec les gouvernements provinciaux et les municipalités, l'APÉCA joue un rôle important dans l'exécution des programmes de travaux d'infrastructure du gouvernement fédéral.

RESSOURCES

Dans les cinq dernières années, l'Agence a dépensé 1,6 milliard de dollars, ce qui comprend 85 millions de dollars réservés à l'infrastructure Canada et aux Programmes de travaux d'infrastructure, et 41,7 millions de dollars en paiements de transfert législatifs.³

La figure 1 présente la ventilation des dépenses par priorité stratégique de l'APÉCA (comprend 85,1 millions de dollars pour le secteur d'activité Administration générale, mais ne comprend pas les sommes consacrées à l'infrastructure, et les paiements de transfert législatifs).

Chacun des projets (de même que les dépenses qui y sont associées) est inscrit sous une seule priorité stratégique. Cependant, il est clair que l'Agence compte plusieurs priorités stratégiques qui se renforcent mutuellement. Par exemple, l'Agence réalise des activités visant à faciliter l'accès aux capitaux et à l'information un peu partout dans la région, mais celles-ci pourraient également figurer sur la liste des activités de développement économique des collectivités.

³ Les paiements de transfert législatifs comprennent les dépenses visées par la loi sur les prêts aux petites entreprises et la loi sur le financement des petites entreprises du Canada ainsi que le passif associé à des prêts ou à l'assurance-crédit en vertu de la loi sur le Canada atlantique.



L'APECA ET SON MANDAT

MANDAT DE L'APECA

En vertu de la *Loi organique de 1987 sur le Canada atlantique*, l'APECA a le mandat d'assurer le développement économique des provinces de l'Atlantique. Le mandat de l'APECA est de favoriser les possibilités de développement économique du Canada atlantique et, plus particulièrement, la croissance des revenus et les créations d'emplois dans cette région.

Elle entreprend diverses activités d'élaboration de politiques, de défenses des intérêts et de coordination qui s'inscrivent dans son vaste mandat de développement économique. L'Agence réalise ces activités dans les provinces de l'Atlantique, en partenariat avec d'autres intervenants, afin de créer un climat propice à la croissance et au développement et d'exploiter le plein potentiel de la région. L'APECA est tenue par la loi d'accorder une importance particulière à la création de PME. Par conséquent, elle veille à ce que les entreprises existantes et les éventuels entrepreneurs aient accès aux outils et aux ressources dont ils ont besoin.

PRIORITÉS STRATÉGIQUES DE L'APECA

L'Agence gère ses activités en fonction d'une série de priorités stratégiques qui relient :

- les résultats d'un examen périodique de l'efficacité des programmes de l'Agence;
- un dialogue permanent avec d'autres intervenants de la région;
- les priorités et les grandes orientations du gouvernement du Canada et du portefeuille de l'Industrie.

Les priorités stratégiques de l'APECA sont exposées plus en détail aux chapitres 4 à 10.

Partenaires de l'APECA

- Collectivités autochtones
- Milieu des affaires
- Établissements de recherche
- Gouvernements provinciaux
- Municipalités
- Universités et collèges
- Organismes et groupes bénévoles de développement économique des collectivités
- Autres ministères fédéraux

PARTENAIRES

Pour exécuter son mandat, l'APECA travaille en collaboration avec la population de l'Atlantique en vue de stimuler le développement à long terme de la région. Elle est résolue à aider les provinces de l'Atlantique à renforcer leur propre assise économique, tout en gardant à l'esprit que le gouvernement doit être un catalyseur plutôt qu'un moteur de la croissance économique. L'Agence accorde donc la plus grande importance à la collaboration des autres intervenants de la région, qui deviennent ainsi des partenaires de la croissance. En fait, l'APECA exerce la quasi-totalité de ses activités de développement dans le contexte de partenariats.

Le ministre responsable de l'APECA, le ministre d'État et le personnel de l'Agence sont tous déterminés à maintenir le dialogue avec les dirigeants du secteur public et du secteur privé. Pour ce faire, ils disposent de divers moyens : réunions officielles, entretiens non structurés, échange d'information et coopération dans des dossiers précis qui s'inscrivent dans le programme de développement économique de la région.

L'APECA travaille en étroite collaboration avec les dirigeants et les associations d'entreprises de divers secteurs économiques. Par exemple, en collaboration avec l'industrie du tourisme, elle dirige de grands projets dans le cadre du Partenariat du tourisme du Canada atlantique, de missions d'initiation aux pratiques exemplaires et de l'Initiative technologique du Canada atlantique. L'Agence se concentre également sur certaines priorités précises au chapitre du développement, par exemple le commerce extérieur, notamment en participant à des missions d'Équipe Canada atlantique. En outre, elle sollicite régulièrement les conseils et l'expertise du secteur privé, par l'intermédiaire de son Conseil consultatif, du Conseil du Fonds d'innovation de son Atlantique. En outre, elle sollicite régulièrement les conseils des programmes de l'Agence;

Ces partenariats aident les collectivités à faire progresser leur programme de développement économique et facilitent la réalisation de projets qui renforcent leur capacité de développement. Par exemple, l'Agence travaille de concert avec les conseils bénévoles des Corporations de développement communautaire et avec les chambres de commerce locales.

En 2001-2002, l'APCA a lancé l'initiative de modernisation de la gestion opérationnelle, dans le cadre du programme fédéral de modernisation de la fonction de contrôleur. Après avoir évalué sa capacité de gestion, elle a cerné dix secteurs prioritaires où elle devait déployer des efforts particuliers pendant les trois exercices suivants afin d'améliorer ses opérations. La prochaine évaluation aura lieu au cours de l'exercice 2004-2005.

Gouvernement en direct

Le discours du Trône du 12 octobre 1999 engageait le gouvernement fédéral, par l'intermédiaire de ses ministères et organismes, à faire du Canada le pays le plus branché du monde. En clair, le gouvernement du Canada résolvait de fournir l'ensemble de ses services en direct par Internet d'ici 2004.

Pendant la période de 1998 à 2003, l'APCA a enrichi le contenu de son site Web et en a accru l'accessibilité, tout en élargissant la gamme de services offerts à ses clients par voie électronique. L'Agence en est maintenant à repenser ses processus administratifs dans le but d'améliorer ses services, notamment les transactions relatives aux projets qui sont effectuées au moyen de données cryptées et de signatures électroniques.

Stratégie de développement durable

Les ministères et organismes fédéraux sont tous tenus de gérer leurs activités conformément aux objectifs et aux pratiques du développement durable. Entre 1998 et 2003, le gouvernement du Canada a consolidé le cadre de gestion du développement durable en y intégrant des lignes directrices pour aider les ministères et les organismes à prendre des décisions. De plus, il a chargé un commissaire au développement durable de superviser la mise en œuvre de la stratégie à l'échelle de la fonction publique tout entière, et il a lancé une gamme variée d'initiatives pour promouvoir les technologies environnementales et les pratiques exemplaires.

Loi sur les langues officielles – Article 41

<http://www.aco-a-pecca.gc.ca/sustain/strat.shml>

L'adresse suivante :

La Stratégie de développement durable de l'APCA, qui a été déposée au Parlement le 10 décembre 1997, a été actualisée le 14 février 2001. Cette stratégie expose les buts et les objectifs de l'APCA, ainsi que les mesures qu'elle compte prendre pour promouvoir le développement durable en Atlantique. En outre, elle précise comment l'Agence entend intégrer le développement durable à ses politiques et à ses programmes. Le lecteur trouvera d'autres renseignements sur la Stratégie de développement durable de l'APCA à l'adresse suivante :

Le développement économique des collectivités francophones des quatre coins de l'Atlantique. De plus, le fait que l'Agence siège activement et en permanence au Comité national de développement des ressources humaines de la francophonie canadienne montre bien son engagement à l'égard de la minorité francophone. Enfin, elle prépare actuellement des activités à l'appui du Congrès mondial académien, qui se tiendra en Nouvelle-Écosse en 2004.



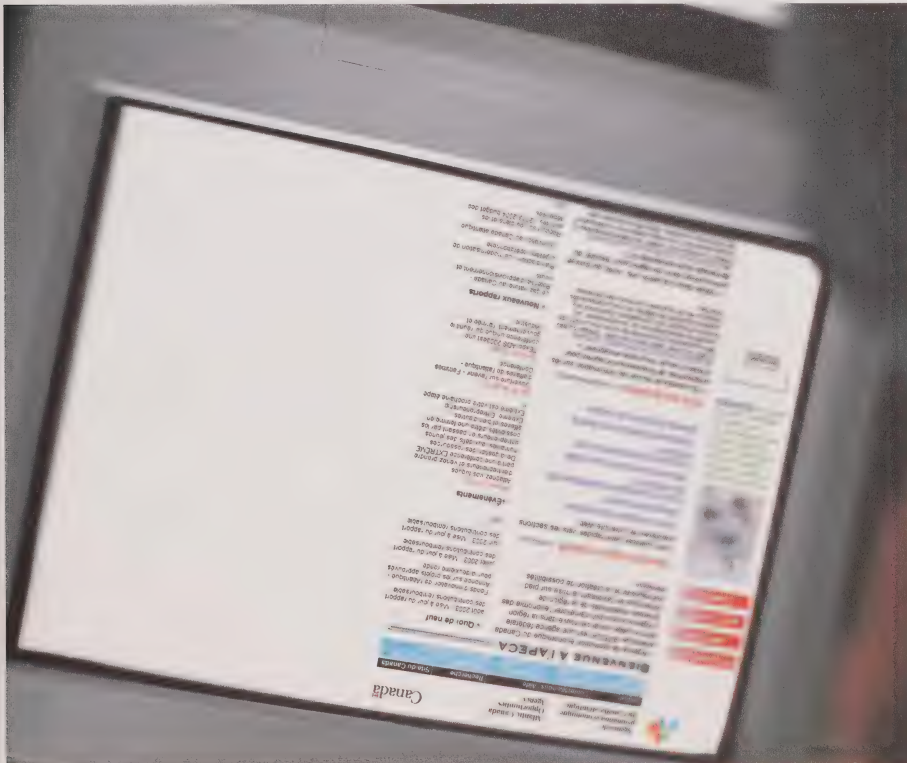
Pendant la période de 1998 à 2003, la présidente du Conseil du Trésor a déposé, au nom du ministre responsable de l'APÉCA, des rapports annuels sur les plans et les priorités de l'APÉCA ainsi que des rapports ministériels sur le rendement pour étayer le Budget des dépenses présenté au Parlement. Ces rapports, qui sont examinés par le Comité permanent de l'Industrie, de la science et de la technologie, peuvent également faire l'information soumise au Parlement soit plus transparente et davantage axée sur des réalisations concrètes.

L'APÉCA a participé au Projet d'amélioration des rapports au Parlement et, avec 17 autres ministères, a remis au Parlement la première série de rapports ministériels sur le rendement à l'automne de 1997.

En 2001, l'Agence s'est vu décerner le tout premier prix conjoint de la Fondation canadienne pour la vérification intégrée et du Conseil du Trésor du Canada pour l'excellence de ses rapports publics sur le rendement.

des programmes.

L'objet d'un examen minutieux de la part du vérificateur général. La reddition de comptes, la responsabilisation, la transparence et la protection de l'intérêt public sont pour l'APÉCA les clés de voûte d'une démarche de gestion axée sur les résultats qui facilite la planification, l'exécution, la surveillance, la vérification et l'évaluation des programmes.



Mesure assortie d'un budget de 700 millions de dollars, le Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique (PICA) se veut un cadre stratégique pour la promotion du développement économique. Il vise à harmoniser les priorités régionales et nationales ainsi qu'à rallier les intervenants des secteurs public et privé à un objectif commun, celui de consolider et d'enrichir la prospérité dans la région.

Le Partenariat a été créé pour renforcer la compétitivité et la productivité de la région dans l'économie mondiale du savoir. Cet objectif rejoint le mandat de l'APÉCA, qui consiste à augmenter les revenus gagnés et à créer des emplois.

Le PICA repose sur une série de partenariats dynamiques, qui facilitent la mise en commun des ressources du gouvernement fédéral et de celles des établissements de recherche, du secteur privé et des nombreuses collectivités de l'Atlantique :

- **Partenariat pour l'innovation** – Investissement de 300 millions de dollars dans l'infrastructure d'innovation de la région.
- **Partenariat pour le commerce et l'investissement** – Partenariat visant à stimuler les exportations issues de la région et à accroître les investissements étrangers directs en Atlantique.
- **Partenariat pour l'entrepreneuriat et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires** – Partenariat qui encourage et aide les PME à parfaire leurs compétences en affaires et leur savoir-faire technologique afin de répondre aux exigences du marché intérieur et étranger.
- **Partenariat pour le développement économique des collectivités** – Investissement de 135 millions de dollars à l'appui de projets communautaires qui renforcent l'assise économique, qui engendrent de nouvelles possibilités d'investissement et qui créent des emplois.

Le chapitre 3 décrit le PICA en plus de détail.

PRIORITÉS DE GESTION

En tant qu'organisme fédéral, l'APÉCA est assujettie aux politiques et aux lignes directrices fédérales qui régissent la prestation des services au public. De même, l'instar des autres ministères et organismes fédéraux, elle rend compte au Parlement de ses dépenses et de son rendement.

AMÉLIORATION DES RAPPORTS AU PARLEMENT / DES RÉSULTATS POUR LES CANADIENS ET LES CANADIENNES

En juin 1997, le Conseil du Trésor est devenu le conseil de gestion du gouvernement du Canada. À ce titre, il s'est vu confier un rôle accru comme catalyseur pour la gestion du changement et l'amélioration des pratiques de gestion des affaires publiques. Le document *Des résultats pour les Canadiens et les Canadiennes : Un cadre de gestion pour le gouvernement du Canada* présente un cadre de gestion cohérent à l'intention de l'ensemble des ministères et organismes, définit les engagements du gouvernement à l'égard de la gestion, décrit le genre de collaboration qui doit exister entre le conseil de gestion du gouvernement, les ministères et les organismes pour moderniser les pratiques de gestion des affaires publiques et expose un programme clair pour amorcer les changements nécessaires.

1998-2000 Programme emploi et croissance

À la fin du XX^e siècle, le gouvernement fédéral a annoncé la mise en place de son Programme emploi et croissance, qui visait à améliorer le rendement économique du pays par des moyens précis : augmentation de la productivité, accroissement de la compétitivité à l'échelle mondiale, intensification de l'activité commerciale et augmentation des investissements étrangers directs. Pour atteindre cet objectif, le gouvernement fédéral misait surtout sur la technologie, l'innovation, le perfectionnement des compétences et l'apprentissage.

Au chapitre de l'emploi, la création de PMB est demeurée l'une des priorités du gouvernement, qui s'est engagé à accorder une importance particulière au développement rural et à la création de débouchés pour les jeunes.

Voici les initiatives issues du Programme emploi

- Le Partenariat rural canadien, dont la création a été

annoncée dans le budget fédéral de 1998. Ce

programme visait à mettre en commun des ressources à l'échelle du gouvernement afin d'améliorer les

perspectives des collectivités rurales.

- Le Plan d'action national en matière de compétences et d'apprentissage pour le XXI^e siècle, dont la mise en

œuvre a été annoncée dans le discours du Trône

de 1999.

- La mise sur pied d'équipe Canada Investissement, qui a été annoncée dans le discours du Trône de 1999,

pour accroître les investissements étrangers directs

- Les initiatives relatives au savoir et à l'innovation, dont

la création a été annoncée dans les budgets fédéraux

de 1999 et de 2000. Ces mesures visent à accroître le rôle et les ressources de la Fondation canadienne pour

l'innovation, du programme Partenariat technologique

- La poursuite, avec la collaboration du secteur privé et des gouvernements provinciaux, des missions

d'équipe commerce/Canada, dirigées par le premier

- Le rétablissement du Programme des travaux

d'infrastructure, qui a été annoncé dans le budget

fédéral de 2000. Ce programme prévoit des

investissements stratégiques destinés à développer

l'infrastructure matérielle.

Avec le concours des Corporations locales de développement communautaire (CCBC), l'Agence a redoublé d'effort pour stimuler le développement économique des collectivités, surtout en milieu rural. De plus, elle s'est efforcée de multiplier les partenariats avec le secteur privé, les établissements d'enseignement, les établissements de recherche et les gouvernements provinciaux, en particulier dans les domaines de l'innovation et de la recherche.

Dans l'exécution de son mandat de recherche stratégique et de défense des intérêts, l'Agence a pris activement part aux discussions et aux débats entourant l'avenir

économique de la région.

Le gouvernement fédéral et les autres intervenants de l'Atlantique accordent une attention accrue aux stratégies et aux politiques qui aident la région à s'affirmer dans l'économie primaire traditionnelle et à se positionner pour accroître ses revenus et créer des emplois dans la nouvelle économie mondiale du savoir. Par conséquent, le débat public des dernières années a notamment porté sur les moyens que peut prendre la région pour participer pleinement à l'élaboration des politiques nationales de promotion de l'innovation et de la recherche.

Ce débat a imprégné la Conférence pour une vision de l'Atlantique, qui s'est tenue à Moncton à l'automne de 1997, de même que le document *Cap sur l'avenir* et les travaux réalisés par des établissements de recherche de la région, tels que le Conseil économique des provinces de l'Atlantique. Du point de vue du gouvernement fédéral, c'est ce qui a mené à la création du Partenariat pour

l'investissement au Canada atlantique.

ministre du Canada.

et des gouvernements provinciaux, des missions

d'équipe commerce/Canada, dirigées par le premier

ministre du Canada.

Le rétablissement du Programme des travaux

d'infrastructure, qui a été annoncé dans le budget

fédéral de 2000. Ce programme prévoit des

investissements stratégiques destinés à développer

l'infrastructure matérielle.



Structure organisationnelle

Le Siège social de l'APÉCA, qui se trouve à Moncton, au Nouveau-Brunswick, compte plusieurs services : bureau du président, Politiques et Programmes, Finances et Services corporatifs, Services juridiques et Ressources humaines.

Dans chaque capitale provinciale de la région de l'Atlantique, l'APÉCA compte un vice-président régional qui se charge de l'exécution de ses programmes. À Sydney, en Nouvelle-Écosse, le vice-président de la Société d'expansion du Cap-Breton voit à l'exécution de la plupart des programmes de l'APÉCA au Cap-Breton. Les vice-présidents sont investis de pouvoirs délégués par le ministre et sont donc habilités à approuver la plupart des propositions et des projets issus de leur région.

Par l'intermédiaire de son bureau d'Ottawa, l'APÉCA veille à ce que les intérêts des Canadiens de l'Atlantique soient pris en considération dans les politiques et les programmes nationaux, et elle aide les entrepreneurs de la région à tirer parti des marchés publics fédéraux.

La Loi sur l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique prévoit la création d'un conseil consultatif chargé d'épauler l'APÉCA. C'est le président de l'APÉCA qui en assume la présidence, et il y siège aux côtés d'un maximum de sept autres membres représentant les quatre provinces de l'Atlantique. Ces personnes sont nommées par le gouverneur en conseil, suivant les recommandations du ministre responsable de l'APÉCA.

Reddition de comptes

D'office, le président de l'APÉCA est également président, premier dirigeant et président du conseil d'administration de la Société d'expansion du Cap-Breton. Cette société d'État, qui a été créée en vertu d'une loi, a pour mandat de promouvoir et de faciliter le financement et le développement des entreprises du Cap-Breton et de autres que celui de la production houillère et de diversifier l'assise économique du Cap-Breton.

Le ministre de l'Industrie est responsable de l'APÉCA par l'intermédiaire du ministre d'État à l'APÉCA. Le président de l'APÉCA est chargé des secteurs d'activité Développement et Administration générale; à ce titre, il relève du ministre de l'Industrie et du ministre d'État.

Les membres du Conseil consultatif de l'APÉCA sont des entrepreneurs ou des professionnels du milieu des affaires qui comprennent bien les défis particuliers à relever pour créer et préserver des entreprises prospères dans leur province respective. Par leur étroite collaboration avec le président, ils peuvent donner des conseils et mettre à profit leur expertise pour faire progresser une gamme variée d'enjeux et de projets qui intéressent l'Agence.

Les membres du Conseil consultatif exercent leurs fonctions à la convenance du ministre, pour un mandat maximal de trois ans. Ils peuvent être nommés à nouveau pour un seul mandat supplémentaire de trois ans.



CONTEXTE : DE 1998 À 2003

Dans le discours du Trône du 30 janvier 2001, le gouvernement du Canada soulignait le rôle de l'innovation et du nouveau savoir dans la création de débouchés pour la population canadienne. Le gouvernement fédéral s'est engagé à doubler d'ici 2010 les sommes investies dans la recherche-développement ainsi qu'à renforcer la capacité de recherche des universités canadiennes, à accélérer la commercialisation des découvertes issues de la recherche et à adopter, en matière de sciences et de technologie, une stratégie nationale élargie par des travaux de recherche internationaux de pointe.

« La région de l'Atlantique a devant elle des possibilités extraordinaires. De par la nature même de la nouvelle économie, les débouchés et la prospérité sont tributaires non du savoir, des compétences et de l'innovation. »

Le très honorable Jean Chrétien
Premier ministre du Canada
Halifax (Nouvelle-Écosse), le 29 juin 2000

Le Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique, dont la création a été annoncée à l'été 2000, a vu le jour en juin 2001. Ce programme au budget de 700 millions de dollars se veut un cadre stratégique pour le développement économique qui intègre les priorités nationales du gouvernement fédéral – l'innovation, la croissance et le développement économique de l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique (APECA), à savoir l'innovation, le développement économique des collectivités, l'entrepreneuriat, le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires et le commerce.

Pour soutenir les efforts du gouvernement fédéral qui cherchait à ramener la stabilité dans les finances du pays – c'est-à-dire à passer d'un déficit de 42 milliards de dollars en 1993-1994 à un budget équilibré en 1997-1998 –, les ministères et les organismes fédéraux ont recentré leurs activités autour de priorités stratégiques précises et se sont attachés à améliorer leurs services.

Pendant cette période, l'APFCA a adapté ses politiques et ses programmes pour qu'ils s'harmonisent davantage :

- aux politiques économiques globales du gouvernement fédéral;

Structure des activités

Le programme de l'APFCA est divisé en deux secteurs d'activité : Développement et Administration générale. Les activités qui concourent à l'atteinte des objectifs de l'Agence sont concentrées en grande partie sous le secteur Développement. Le secteur d'activité Administration générale réunit les fonctions administratives de l'Agence et les isole ainsi des activités directement associées à ses programmes.

ORGANISATION DE L'AGENCE

- Tribunal de la concurrence
 - Statistique Canada
 - Société d'expansion du Cap-Breton
 - Infrastructures Canada
 - Industrie Canada
 - Diversification de l'économie de l'Ouest canadien du Québec
 - Développement économique Canada pour les régions
 - Conseil national de recherches du Canada
 - Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie
 - Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines
 - Conseil canadien des normes
 - Commission du droit d'auteur
 - Commission canadienne du tourisme
 - Banque de développement du Canada
 - Agence spatiale canadienne
 - Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique
- Le portefeuille de l'Industrie :**

L'APFCA fait partie du portefeuille de l'Industrie, groupe de seize ministères et organismes qui rendent compte au Parlement par l'entremise du ministre de l'Industrie. Le partenariat et la coopération sont les fondements mêmes du concept de portefeuille, et ils font aussi partie intégrante de la philosophie d'exploitation de l'APFCA, qui travaille de concert avec d'autres intervenants en vue de créer des possibilités économiques et de répondre aux besoins des PME de la région de l'Atlantique.

Position au sein du gouvernement

CONTEXTE OPÉRATIONNEL

- à l'objectif de concertation qui sous-tend l'organisation du portefeuille de l'Industrie, au sein duquel l'APFCA joue un rôle clé;
- aux priorités établies à l'échelle du gouvernement pour la gestion des ministères et des organismes.

Le rapport compte quatre grandes sections :

Section 1

L'Agence – Description des politiques et des mesures de gestion gouvernementales qui forment le contexte dans lequel l'Agence a exécuté son travail dans les cinq dernières années. Cette section décrit également les partenariats que l'APCA a conclus avec les intervenants du secteur privé et du secteur public de l'Atlantique afin de faciliter l'exécution de son mandat.

Section 2

L'Agence à l'œuvre – Exposé des activités de l'Agence dans les domaines suivants :

- politiques, défense des intérêts et coordination;
- entrepreneuriat et perfectionnement des compétences en affaires;
- innovation;
- développement économique des collectivités;
- tourisme;
- commerce et investissements;
- accès aux capitaux et à l'information.

Section 3

Perspectives de l'APCA – Bilan du rendement

économique de la région de l'Atlantique dans les cinq dernières années et analyse des impacts engendrés par l'APCA. Cette section présente également un exposé avant-gardiste sur les défis que devra relever l'APCA et sur la vision adoptée pour la région de l'Atlantique.

Section 4

Méthodologie et démarche – Annexe technique détaillant le modèle logique et les techniques de mesure qui ont servi au calcul des résultats.

Conformément au paragraphe 21(2) de la Loi organique de 1987 sur le Canada atlantique, le président de l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique (APCA) est tenu de soumettre au ministre responsable un rapport quinquennal sur les activités de l'Agence. Le ministre doit ensuite déposer ce rapport au Parlement dans les quinze jours de séance qui suivent.

Le présent rapport, qui porte sur la période allant du 1^{er} avril 1998 au 31 mars 2003, est le troisième que soumet l'Agence depuis sa création en juin 1987.





- de 1997 à 2002. Environ 25 pour cent de ces emplois sont imputables aux entreprises bénéficiant de l'aide de l'APCA.
- Les exportations dans l'industrie aquacole ont augmenté de près de 50 pour cent entre 1997 et 2002. Près de 50 pour cent des gains en emplois dans le secteur aquacole sont imputables à la croissance d'entreprises bénéficiant de l'aide de l'APCA.

Accès aux capitaux et à l'information

D'après le Conférence Board du Canada, « le marché de la dette des PME est moins développé dans la région de l'Atlantique qu'au Canada en général. Il peut en effet y avoir moins de fournisseurs locaux, moins d'ampleur, moins de dispensateurs de services et moins de choix à l'échelle locale. »

Pour combler cette lacune, le Programme de développement des entreprises de l'Agence permet le maintien des investissements des PME puisqu'ils ne sont pas garantis, agissent sensiblement comme les capitaux propres, ce qui accroît la viabilité des projets et permet d'obtenir des fonds d'autres sources.

Selon une évaluation récente du programme, les entreprises ayant bénéficié de l'aide du PDE ont connu une croissance de l'emploi quatre fois plus élevée que celle des entreprises n'ayant pas obtenu d'aide. La croissance du chiffre d'affaires était plus de six fois plus élevée que celle des entreprises n'ayant pas obtenu d'aide.

ACE Equity Atlantic Inc. est un partenariat entre l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique, les gouvernements des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique et des bailleurs de fonds du secteur privé qui fournissent du capital de risque aux entreprises. Il a généré son capital plus de cinq fois en investissant dans des transactions de capital de risque d'une valeur de plus de 100 millions de dollars à ce jour. Les entreprises de portefeuille emploient maintenant plus de 400 travailleurs du savoir.

Les Centres de services aux entreprises du Canada fournissent des renseignements aux PME. Une évaluation récente a révélé que 85 pour cent des clients étaient satisfaits » ou « Très satisfaits » des services offerts.

PARTENARIAT POUR L'INVESTISSEMENT AU CANADA ATLANTIQUE

Le Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique

(PCA) sert de lien entre les priorités régionales et nationales et vise à unir les intervenants des secteurs public et privé dans un effort concerté pour renforcer et assurer la prospérité à long terme de la région.

Le PCA comporte quatre volets d'investissement : 1) Le Partenariat pour l'innovation, grâce auquel on favorise un programme d'innovation accélérée, notamment de nouvelles initiatives de recherche et développement en

EFFETS SUR LA CROISSANCE ECONOMIQUE EN ATLANTIQUE

Effet global

- Pour démontrer la contribution de l'APFCA à la croissance régionale au cours de la période s'échelonnant de 1989 à 1999, le livre de paie, une bonne mesure du revenu gagné, s'est accru presque deux fois plus vite au sein des entreprises ayant bénéficié de l'aide de l'APFCA qu'au sein des entreprises qui n'ont pas reçu d'aide.
 - Au cours de la période de cinq ans, l'appui direct de l'Agence aux entreprises a permis d'atteindre plus de cinq dollars en gains du produit intérieur brut (PIB) pour chaque dollar dépensé par l'APFCA.
 - La région atlantique compte un total supérieur à 20 000 emplois de plus en 2002 que ce n'aurait été le cas sans les gains d'emplois nets (directs plus indirects et induits) résultant de l'appui direct de l'Agence aux petites entreprises.
 - Au cours de la période de cinq ans, soit de 1998 à 2002, les dépenses de l'Agence en aide directe d'environ 500 millions de dollars aux petites entreprises ont entraîné plus de 600 millions de dollars en revenus d'impôt.
- La croissance des ventes à l'exportation dans le secteur manufacturier a entraîné la création de près de 15 000 emplois supplémentaires au cours de la période de 1998 à 2002. Un peu plus du tiers de ces emplois sont imputables aux entreprises bénéficiant de l'aide de l'APFCA.- Une croissance importante dans le secteur du tourisme a entraîné la création de 2 500 emplois supplémentaires dans le secteur de l'hébergement cours de la période



Innovation

Le taux d'adoption des technologies de pointe par les entreprises manufacturières est beaucoup plus bas dans la région. Les études ont démontré que le plus grand obstacle à l'introduction de technologies de procédés et de produits améliorés est le coût élevé du développement. Le manque de personnel spécialisé constitue également un obstacle important. En essayant d'éliminer ces obstacles, l'APÉCA a encouragé de façon très active l'accroissement de la productivité.

L'investissement de l'APÉCA dans l'innovation et la formation spécialisée a entraîné une croissance considérable des entreprises ayant bénéficié de l'aide de l'APÉCA, comme le démontre l'augmentation du nombre d'emplois hautement spécialisés et mieux payés. Le Fonds d'innovation de l'Atlantique constitue un stimulus important à l'étendue et au rythme de l'innovation dans la région et il renforce le rôle de l'Agence en matière de conclusion de partenariats en innovation. Même s'il est difficile de mesurer l'attribution, il est important de noter que les gains de productivité du secteur manufacturier en Atlantique ont dépassé la moyenne canadienne au cours des cinq dernières années.

Développement économique des collectivités

Près de la moitié de la population du Canada atlantique vit en régions rurales, et la mise en valeur des points forts de ces secteurs constitue une partie essentielle de la stratégie de développement économique de l'APÉCA. Environ 65 pour cent des prêts accordés en vertu du Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE) de l'Agence vont aux organismes à l'extérieur des régions métropolitaines. Cette situation est survenue à un moment où les banques à charte fermaient 16 pour cent de leurs succursales de la région, de ce pourcentage, 45 pour cent des fermetures avaient lieu en régions rurales.

Tourisme

Le leadership de l'APÉCA a contribué à une croissance marquée du tourisme dans la région atlantique. Depuis 1994, les efforts de marketing du Partenariat de l'Industrie

Commerce et investissement

L'industrie touristique en Atlantique a fait des progrès notables dans l'adoption des technologies d'Internet et du commerce électronique grâce à l'appui de l'APÉCA à l'initiative technologique du Canada atlantique. Par exemple, une proportion de 87 pour cent des entreprises touristiques de la région atlantique participait au commerce électronique de la région-consommateurs en 2002, comparativement à 42 pour cent des entreprises en 1999.

Comme moins de 3 pour cent des petites et moyennes entreprises de l'Atlantique s'adonnent à des activités d'exportation, l'Agence s'est donnée comme priorité d'accroître la base d'entreprises exportatrices dans la région par l'entremise d'un éventail de mesures précises visant à améliorer l'expérience de l'exportation et son succès. Les enquêtes de suivi indiquent que près de 80 pour cent des clients du PDE qui ont devenus de nouveaux exportateurs en 1998 et 1999 exportent toujours avec succès aujourd'hui. En comparaison, environ la moitié des nouveaux exportateurs canadiens continuent d'exporter après une période de trois ou quatre ans.

Depuis 1999, les missions commerciales commanditées par Équipe Canada atlantique, un partenariat entre l'APÉCA, le ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Commerce international ainsi que l'Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada, ont engendré des ventes à court terme d'environ dix millions de dollars, et on prévoit que les ventes à long terme dépasseront les 150 millions de dollars.

L'Entente de COOPÉRATION Canada / provinces de l'Atlantique sur la promotion du commerce extérieur (EPCF) est un effort de collaboration entre le gouvernement fédéral et les provinces atlantiques. Plus de 90 projets, touchant près de 1 600 entreprises, ont été approuvés en vertu de l'EPCF entre l'exercice 1998-1999 et l'exercice 2002-2003. L'étude la plus récente a indiqué que 22 pour cent des entreprises ont commencé à exporter vers de nouveaux marchés; 30 pour cent ont augmenté leur volume d'exportation aux marchés actuels; et 28,5 pour cent ont identifié des nouveaux marchés éventuels.



Au cours des cinq dernières années, des études de l'Agence effectuées en vertu de la fonction politique ont mis l'accent sur la maximisation des retombées de l'innovation, de la recherche et du développement ainsi que sur le développement de politiques dans un vaste éventail de

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Résumé	i
Introduction	1
Section 1	
L'Agence	
Chapitre 1	2
Contexte : De 1998 à 2003	
Section 2	
L'APECA à l'œuvre	
Chapitre 2	8
L'APECA et son mandat	
Chapitre 3	12
Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique	
Chapitre 4	16
Politiques, défense des intérêts et coordination	
Chapitre 5	24
Entrepreneurs et perfectionnement des compétences en affaires	
Chapitre 6	30
Innovation	
Chapitre 7	36
Développement économique des collectivités	
Chapitre 8	42
Tourisme	
Chapitre 9	50
Commerce et investissement	
Chapitre 10	58
Accès aux capitaux et à l'information	
Section 3	
Perspectives de l'APECA	
Chapitre 11	64
Croissance économique dans les provinces de l'Atlantique et impact de l'APECA	
Chapitre 12	70
L'avenir	
Section 4	
Annexe technique sur la méthodologie et la démarche adoptées	73
Acronymes et abréviations employés dans le rapport	80



MESSAGE DU MINISTRE D'ÉTAT

De plus en plus, les idées, le talent et l'ingéniosité sont les moteurs de la productivité et de la compétitivité en Atlantique. Pour être en mesure de soutenir la concurrence sur les marchés mondiaux, les provinces de l'Atlantique doivent, aujourd'hui plus que jamais, innover de façon productive.

Il subsiste des défis à relever, mais il ne fait aucun doute que la région est résolument tournée vers l'entrepreneuriat, la technologie de pointe et l'exportation. Propriétaires d'entreprise, gestionnaires, éducateurs et dirigeants communautaires, tous acquièrent de l'expérience et de l'assurance dans un environnement mondial où par la concurrence.

L'APÉCA continue d'adapter ses activités aux besoins des PME de la région de l'Atlantique. Pour ce faire, elle mise sur l'entrepreneuriat, le perfectionnement des compétences, le commerce, les investissements, l'innovation, la technologie et, enfin, l'accès aux capitaux.

L'Agence n'a pas ménagé ses efforts pour stimuler le développement économique des collectivités et pour établir de nouveaux partenariats avec le secteur privé, les établissements de recherche et les gouvernements provinciaux, en particulier dans les domaines de l'innovation, de la recherche et du tourisme.

En 2000, le gouvernement du Canada a instauré le Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique, programme prévoyant une série d'investissements équilibrés dans les domaines de l'innovation, du commerce, de l'investissement, de l'entrepreneuriat, du perfectionnement des compétences en affaires et du développement économique des collectivités. Faisant fond sur les réalisations antérieures de l'APÉCA, ce nouveau partenariat a permis à l'Agence d'investir de nouvelles ressources dans ses stratégies, ses priorités et ses programmes actuels tout en s'orientant de façon plus claire vers l'innovation.

Les forces socioéconomiques à l'œuvre à l'intérieur et au-delà des frontières de la région favorisent l'essor de nouvelles industries fortement axées sur le savoir et servent de moteurs à l'innovation dans les secteurs traditionnels. Au quotidien, l'APÉCA travaille à faire en sorte que ces nouvelles tendances rapportent des dividendes aux particuliers, aux entreprises et aux collectivités de l'Atlantique.

Le ministre d'État

(Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique),

L'honorable Gerry Byrne





Au cours des cinq dernières années, la réussite économique de notre pays est caractérisée surtout par une hausse de la productivité des entreprises, un accroissement de leur compétitivité à l'échelle mondiale, une amélioration de leurs résultats commerciaux et une intensification des investissements étrangers directs. Comment y sommes-nous parvenus? En accordant de plus en plus d'importance à la technologie, à l'innovation, au perfectionnement des compétences et à l'apprentissage.

Pendant cette période, les 16 ministères et organismes fédéraux qui forment le portefeuille de l'Industrie ont joué un rôle crucial dans l'exécution du Programme emploi et croissance du gouvernement du Canada. Travaillant de concert avec leurs partenaires fédéraux et provinciaux, les membres du Portefeuille ont fait la promotion des grandes priorités du pays au chapitre du développement économique : l'entrepreneuriat et le perfectionnement des compétences, l'innovation, le commerce et les investissements, la création de débouchés pour les jeunes, le développement rural et le développement des collectivités.

Je me suis donné comme priorité de veiller à ce que le Portefeuille continue de fournir un soutien stratégique pertinent aux citoyens du Canada qui cherchent à exploiter les débouchés engendrés par une économie mondiale axée sur le savoir.

En tant qu'organisme membre du Portefeuille de l'Industrie, l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique (APECA) voit à l'exécution du Programme emploi et croissance dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. Les efforts qu'elle déploie depuis cinq ans ont eu plusieurs retombées. En effet, l'Agence a grandement contribué à consolider le processus de planification économique à long terme dans la région. De plus, par son travail d'élaboration de politiques et de recherche, l'APECA a consacré du temps et d'importantes ressources à un enjeu clé, la compétitivité, et elle a aidé les entreprises et les collectivités à tirer parti directement des programmes et des initiatives de développement économique. Le présent rapport montre la façon dont l'APECA a adapté ses programmes et ses politiques au cours des cinq dernières années pour relever les défis d'une société en évolution.

Le ministre de l'Industrie,
Allan Rock
 Allan Rock



« La région de l'Atlantique a devant elle des possibilités extraordinaires. De par la nature même de la nouvelle économie, les débouchés et la prospérité sont tributaires non plus de la géographie, mais bien du savoir, des compétences et de l'innovation. »

Le très honorable Jean Chrétien
Premier ministre du Canada



Un engagement envers le développement durable
À l'APÉCA, nous croyons qu'un environnement sain est essentiel au développement d'une économie durable, forte et croissante. Nous le voulons protéger, l'environnement de la région en faisant la promotion des entreprises et des communautés durables au Canada atlantique et en donnant l'exemple par la gestion écologique des activités mêmes de l'APÉCA.

Pour obtenir des exemplaires supplémentaires du *Rapport quinquennal présenté au Parlement – 1998-2003* de l'APÉCA, veuillez vous adresser à :

**Agence de promotion économique
du Canada atlantique (APÉCA)**
C.P. 6051
Moncton (Nouveau-Brunswick) E1C 9J8
CANADA

Téléphone : 1-800-561-7862
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Ce document se trouve également sur le site Web de l'APÉCA à l'adresse suivante :

www.apeca.gc.ca/publication/f5ans/1998-2003/repord.shtml

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N° de CAT : C89-4/108-2003
ISBN : 0-662-67547-9



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Agence de promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Rapport quinquennal présenté au Parlement 1998-2003



Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

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Five-Year Report to Parliament 2003–2008

Building a Stronger Economy Together



Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Canada 

Minister's Message

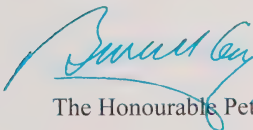
For more than two decades, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) has been working with Atlantic Canadians to help build strong communities and a diversified regional economy. Twenty years after Prime Minister Brian Mulroney established ACOA, the Agency continues to play a key role in the future of the region.

ACOA's work to develop a more innovative, productive and competitive regional economy is directly linked to our government's goal of a prosperous and united Canada. The Agency is committed to encouraging innovation and assisting the strategic growth of industries such as aquaculture, the life sciences, and aerospace and defence.

It will continue its work to expand export trade in emerging markets and to advance the development of the Atlantic Gateway.

As a major regional economic development agency, ACOA remains connected and forward-looking in shaping policies and delivering programs that address the region's evolving economic challenges; that capture new development opportunities; and that support Atlantic Canada's drive to reach its full potential.

Therefore, it is with pleasure that I table the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's Five-Year Report to Parliament 2003-2008.



The Honourable Peter G. MacKay
Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway



Executive Summary

In 2007, ACOA commemorated 20 years of service to Atlantic Canadians. Over these two decades, Atlantic Canada has undergone a transformation. The region has built a new entrepreneurial culture that is increasingly innovative and outward looking, and the Agency has played a crucial role in this transformation. By adapting rapidly to the changing social and economic forces facing the region, ACOA has helped businesses and communities in the Atlantic provinces to strengthen and compete globally.

Atlantic Canada's economy has performed well in recent years; however, new challenges have emerged. International competition from low-cost producers and a high exchange rate have challenged the region's limited manufacturing base and seasonal industries. While resource-based industries continue to underpin parts of the economy, there has been diversification into new value-added products and services, and knowledge-based sectors have become part of the region's landscape. ACOA has supported the development of several of these sectors as they sought growth and value-added opportunities.

During the last five years, ACOA has encouraged more innovation and more research and development, promoted export trade and foreign investment, and helped Atlantic Canadians to acquire the skills needed for business success in the 21st century. As a result, Atlantic Canadians are more innovative and export-oriented than ever before.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) works to create opportunities for economic growth in Atlantic Canada by helping businesses become more competitive, innovative and productive, by working with communities to develop and diversify local economies, and by championing the strengths of Atlantic Canada.

Highlights 2003-2008

ACOA manages its operation within a framework of strategic priorities that reflect:

- the results of policy research and analysis;
- regular review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Agency's programs;
- ongoing development with stakeholders in the region; and
- the priorities and direction of the Government of Canada.

ACOA's strategic focus in support of its mandate is addressed through activities in support of its three strategic outcomes: Competitive and sustainable Atlantic enterprises, with emphasis on those of small and medium size; Dynamic and sustainable communities for Atlantic Canada; and Policies and programs that strengthen the Atlantic economy.

Innovation and stronger innovative capacity through research and development and the deployment of technology are fundamental to the region's productivity and competitiveness.

The Agency has continued to foster R&D via the Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF), which was renewed in 2005 with an additional \$300 million in funding. Over the five-year period 2003-2008, four competitive calls for proposals were held. More than 200 partnerships between private sector and university/research institutions were established to jointly pursue these R&D projects. A total of 144 projects were approved, resulting in \$357 million invested in projects valued at \$790 million.

Since 2003, the Agency has also funded over 230 R&D projects, involving more than \$70 million in conditionally repayable assistance. It has supported more than 85 technology adoption projects involving more than \$21 million in assistance. This assistance from ACOA has leveraged more than \$245 million in investments from other sources.

Strengthening innovation and the commercialization of science and technology is vital to achieving sustainable economic growth.

Impact on Economic Growth

- Each dollar invested directly in businesses through ACOA programming resulted in more than \$7 in gains in Atlantic Canada's GDP.
- Total Atlantic GDP was estimated to be \$1.2 billion higher in 2007 than it would have been without ACOA's direct support to business.
- From 2003 to 2007, ACOA's direct support to business of \$622 million generated tax revenues of over \$865 million.
- Total gross employment was almost 25,000 higher in 2007 than it would have been without ACOA's direct support to business.

ACOA recognizes that the region's universities possess strong R&D capabilities and that a partnership with the private sector could lead to increased commercialization opportunities.

An example of this partnership is Springboard Atlantic Inc. Established in 2004 by the Association of Atlantic Universities, Springboard Atlantic encourages commercialization of university research and has already resulted in:

- triple the number of technology transfer professionals, industry liaison officers and others engaged in activities to support this effort;
- double the number of disclosures, patents, commercialization agreements and revenues; and
- the research budgets of Springboard members having increased from a total of \$225 million to \$280 million.

The Agency works to create opportunities leading to economic growth in Atlantic Canada by promoting export trade and by seeking foreign investment. ACOA's trade role in the global economy is designed to strengthen the export performance of the Atlantic region by enhancing the capabilities of small and medium-sized businesses to establish and expand activities. Exporting brings many concrete, bottom-line benefits to these businesses, such as increased sales, higher profits and less dependence on traditional markets. Atlantic Canada's comparatively small population limits the commercial opportunities that export markets can produce.

From 2003 to 2007, as part of its work in promoting and developing export capacity, the Agency led seven Team Canada Atlantic trade and investment missions, engaging more than 230 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) throughout the region and generating in excess of \$10 million in immediate-export sales.

ACOA plays a key role in strengthening partnerships and mobilizing stakeholders to work on governmental priorities. The Agency is moving forward in partnership with Transport Canada and the four Atlantic Provinces to develop an Atlantic Gateway strategy. Gateways and trade corridors consist of transport infrastructure of national significance. The Atlantic Gateway has the potential to be a driver of new investments in the region, and presents Atlantic Canada with an opportunity to benefit from an increase in international trade.

Community development has emerged as an important means to foster economic diversification in Atlantic Canada. The Agency's approach to community development is based on the principle that the problems facing communities, such as unemployment and economic instability, can best be addressed through a holistic and participatory process. ACOA has invested over \$316 million in more than 900 community-based projects through the Innovative Communities Fund and its predecessor, the Strategic Community Investment Fund. These investments have leveraged an additional \$359 million from other sources. In addition, Community Business Development Corporations have issued over 9,000 loans, totalling \$257 million, to businesses in their respective communities, which have leveraged an additional \$262 million in private sector investment/financing.

The Agency advocates industrial regional benefits and the enhancement of opportunities for Atlantic Canadian businesses to participate in federal procurement. This focuses particularly on major Crown projects that offer the potential for regional benefits. In the last five years, Atlantic Canada's participation in major Crown projects represented industrial regional benefits in excess of \$1 billion.

A Leader in Management

ACOA has been recognized for its solid management performance in the Agency's annual Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) assessment by the Treasury Board Portfolio. These MAF assessments study management structures and capabilities across federal departments. Over the last two years, ACOA has been ranked among the leaders in the Government of Canada, and has also been commended for bringing overall improvements to its management agenda.

Best Practices in Managing Grants and Contributions

An independent Blue Ribbon Panel commissioned by the President of the Treasury Board of Canada in June 2006 to make recommendations regarding the efficiency and accountability of grants and contributions highlighted ACOA's best practices. The Agency continuously focuses on excellence with respect to client service and has been recognized by the Blue Ribbon Panel as a vanguard department in terms of enhancements moving from a project-based to a client-based approach, and for developing streamlined processes and automated tools to better serve its clients.



FROM RED TAPE

TO CLEAR RESULTS

THE ACOA REPORT

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

2003-2008

Looking Forward

ACOA's priorities reflect the objectives and principles of *Advantage Canada*, the Government of Canada's overarching economic framework, which is based on five key advantages. The Agency's mandate is most closely tied to the entrepreneurial, knowledge and infrastructure advantages.

In spite of recent progress, Atlantic Canada continues to face challenges in the pursuit of a higher standard of living. Atlantic Canada remains one of Canada's most rural regions and is characterized by a stagnant population level, primarily due to a high level of out-migration. With unemployment levels at a 30-year low, ACOA is shifting focus from helping business to create employment to stimulating growth in productivity, competitiveness and earned income.

The Agency's emphasis is now on fostering research and development, technology adoption, business skills development, and trade and investment. In addition, ACOA will pursue balanced and strategic urban-rural development, and strengthened advocacy.

Introduction

ACOA's legislative status was authorized by the *Government Organization Act, Atlantic Canada 1987*, which received Royal Assent August 18, 1987, and came into force September 15, 1987. Part I of the Act established ACOA, while Part II established the Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC), which is included in the Minister of ACOA's portfolio.

Pursuant to Section 21 (2) of the Act, the President of the Agency is required to submit to the Minister of ACOA, a five-year Report to Parliament on the Agency's activities. The Minister is required to table this report in Parliament.

This report covers the period April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2008. In some instances, the time frame of the performance information is determined by data availability from external sources and the information may cover the most current five-year period. For example, the latest Statistics Canada data used to provide a comparison of results for ACOA clients versus non-ACOA clients is available for the period ending 2005. This is the fourth such report to be submitted since the Agency was established.

The report is organized in two main sections.

Section 1 – ACOA's Impact over Two Decades provides an overview of ACOA's contribution to the transformation of Atlantic Canada's economy over the past 20 years. This section outlines how ACOA's role has changed since 1987 and how its enhanced role has influenced business and community development and innovation in each of the four Atlantic provinces.

Section 2 – Organized for Results describes the activities of the Agency in the strategic areas of Enterprise Development, Community Development, and Policy, Advocacy and Coordination. Enterprise Development is broad-based and includes the areas of innovation, trade and investment, entrepreneurship and business skills development as well as expansion of the enterprise base in the region. The section concludes with a look ahead at the challenges facing the region as ACOA continues its commitment to Atlantic Canada's economic development.

Supplemental Information on the economic performance of Atlantic Canada over the five-year period, analysis of ACOA's impact and ACOA's Management Agenda are provided on ACOA's website.

See: <http://www.acoa-apec.ca>. ☺



Chapter 1

Growing with Atlantic Canadians

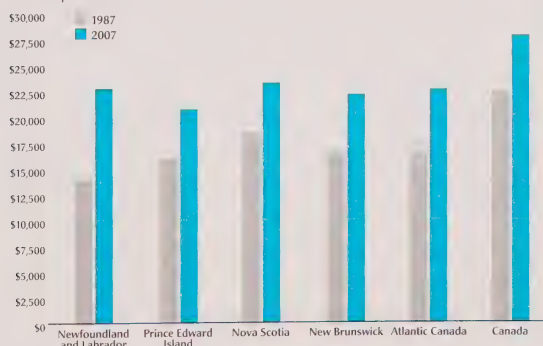
In 2007, ACOA commemorated 20 years of service to Atlantic Canadians. As it enters its third decade, ACOA can reflect on an impressive record as the federal entity responsible for the government's economic development efforts in the provinces of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Transformation of the Atlantic Economy

In the past 20 years, Atlantic Canada has undergone a transformation. The region has built a new entrepreneurial culture that is increasingly innovative and outward looking. While ACOA cannot claim exclusive credit for this transformation, the Agency has played a very important role.

When ACOA was created, Atlantic Canada was facing an unemployment rate of 14% and declining resource industries. The economic performance of the region

FIGURE 1 Real Earned Income per Capita
Atlantic Canada and Canada, 1987 and 2007
Source: Statistics Canada – Provincial Economic Accounts; Conference Board of Canada Provincial Service



This year marks the Agency's 20th year of service.

For more than two decades, ACOA has been making a difference in the lives of Atlantic Canadians by...

- ...helping our entrepreneurs to start up and expand...
- ...helping our businesses boost productivity and adopt new technologies...
- ...strengthening the infrastructure of our communities...
- ...and supporting our youth.

Twenty years later, the Agency is recognized as a force for growth and development... it has a strong record of working with its partners.

The Honourable Peter MacKay
Minister of National Defence
and Minister of ACOA
October 2007

over the past 20 years, as illustrated in the charts shown, clearly demonstrates a marked improvement in the economic position of Atlantic Canadians.

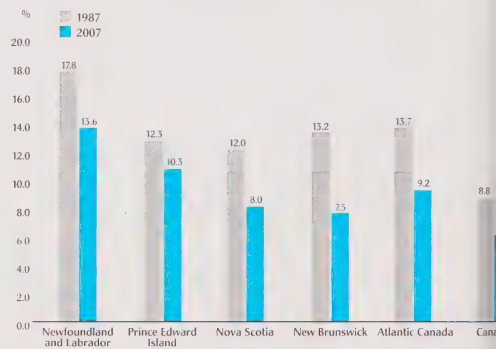
Figure 1 shows that real earned income per person in the region, for example, was 36.2% higher in 2007 than in 1987, far exceeding the national rate of increase of 24.3%.

Figure 2 illustrates a marked reduction in the region's unemployment rate, representing significant improvements in the well-being and economic fortunes of Atlantic Canadians. In 2007, the unemployment rate in the region was 4.5 percentage points below the rate in 1987. The differential between the unemployment rate in Atlantic Canada and Canada as a whole fell from 4.9% to 3.2%.

FIGURE 2

Unemployment Rate Atlantic Canada and Canada, 1987 and 2007

Source: Statistics Canada – Labour Force Survey



The Early Years: Entrepreneurship Development

ACOA's efforts in the very early years were clearly and almost exclusively directed to the development of the private sector. The Agency developed a comprehensive entrepreneurship development strategy to increase awareness of entrepreneurship as a viable career option and to put in place a series of support services for small businesses, including training, counselling and research. Indeed, the strategy was acknowledged as a successful model to be studied by other countries and, in 1996, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and ACOA published *The Implementation of an Entrepreneurship Development Strategy: The Case of the Atlantic Region*.

In 1987, ACOA put in place a new program for Atlantic Canadian business. The ACOA Action Program focused specifically on entrepreneurship, with a special emphasis on the start up and expansion of small and medium-sized businesses. Billed as "simpler, more direct and more responsive," the Action Program focused on providing assistance for the establishment, modernization and expansion of businesses. It provided support for new product development, innovation projects and business studies, as well as assistance to non-commercial organizations.

The COOPERATION Program, designed to work in a complementary fashion with the Action Program, was initiated by the Agency. It built on earlier investments in basic development infrastructure and targeted strategic investments and initiatives. As the name implies, the COOPERATION Program comprised collaborative agreements between the federal and provincial governments. This pooling of resources and combined focus of efforts facilitated investment strategies that contributed to common goals – creating the kind of economic climate in which business and industry could grow in Atlantic Canada.

Reaching out to Communities and Focusing on Innovation

By the early 1990s, however, a number of social and economic forces gave the Agency an opportunity to revisit its approach to regional development. With the collapse of the Atlantic groundfish industry and the closure and reduction of several Canadian Forces bases, ACOA worked with communities and took on a new role by helping communities to mobilize in a focused way in order to adjust to new realities and respond to the sudden and often traumatic loss of local jobs and opportunities.

Through programs such as the Fisheries Alternatives Program and the Base Closure Fund, ACOA worked with the impacted communities to develop and invest in sustainable economic development initiatives based on the opportunities that existed within these communities. This collaboration allowed communities to take stock of what they had to offer, build on their strengths, and address some of their challenges; all in an effort to move forward in a positive direction. ACOA also undertook to deliver the Canada Infrastructure Works Program on behalf of the federal government, investing in core infrastructure cost-shared projects with provincial and municipal governments. During this time, ACOA assumed responsibility for the delivery of the Community Futures program in Atlantic Canada, supporting a network of 41 Community Business Development Corporations that provide lending capital and business counselling services to SMEs in rural Atlantic Canada.

It was becoming increasingly evident at this time that globalization and the rise of the knowledge-based economy were pushing Atlantic Canada toward what economist Michael Porter and others called the new “paradigm of competitiveness.” Prosperity in this new economy would be based on productivity, rather than on labour or natural resources.

In response to this new dynamic, ACOA adapted its business programs to focus less on support for the acquisition of capital assets and more on the assets associated with productivity – innovation, marketing, international trade and human resources development. In its policy leadership role, the Agency conducted extensive new research and mobilized its



partners, including provincial governments, business leaders and universities, to work on strategic options to advance the region's development capacity.

The Atlantic Investment Partnership: Enhancing Global Opportunities

This change in policy emphasis led ultimately to the development of the Atlantic Investment Partnership (AIP),

a major five-year initiative launched in 2000 and renewed in 2005. The AIP has made major investments in innovation, community economic development, trade and investment, and entrepreneurship and business skills development.

In 2005, the federal government committed \$590 million for 2005-2010 for the renewal of the Atlantic Investment Partnership. This has enabled ACOA to continue investing in:

- public and private sector partnerships in innovation, trade and investment;
- entrepreneurship and business skills development; and
- community development.

These investments not only address economic challenges and opportunities facing Atlantic Canada in the global marketplace, but also enhance participation in national initiatives such as the Building Canada Program, Mobilizing Science and Technology to Canada's Advantage, and the Global Commerce Strategy.

Chapter 2

Building on Success

During the last five years, ACOA has continued to build on the success of the original Atlantic Investment Partnership (AIP) by encouraging more innovation and research and development, promoting export trade and foreign direct investment, strengthening communities and helping Atlantic Canadians acquire the skills needed for business success in the 21st century. As a result, Atlantic Canadians are more innovative and export-oriented than ever before.

The commercialization potential of Atlantic Canada's R&D continues to grow. The Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF) has been instrumental in helping to move R&D from the laboratory to the marketplace. In the five competitive rounds of the AIF program (four of which occurred within the five-year reporting period 2003-2008):

- 627 proposals were received, requesting \$1.96 billion in funding for projects valued at \$3.7 billion.
- 192 projects were approved, involving \$512 million in AIF investments for projects valued at \$1.16 billion.
- The percentage of institutional projects (universities and colleges) with a private sector partner has increased significantly, from 67% in Round I to 92% in Round V.

Since April 1, 2003, via its Innovation element, the Business Development Program has funded over 230 R&D projects, involving more than \$70 million in assistance. It has supported more than 85 technology adoption/adaptation projects involving more than \$21 million in assistance. This financial support from ACOA has leveraged more than \$245 million in investments from other sources.

At the community level, ACOA continues to recognize the importance of local engagement to facilitate effective community economic

development. ACOA works in collaboration with other economic development stakeholders to ensure that community development investments are based on strategic economic development plans that recognize the strengths and address the challenges of communities. Through a network of Regional Economic Development Organizations and Community Business Development Corporations, the Agency has facilitated a mobilization of Atlantic Canadian communities, where community development is based on a bottom-up approach.

ACOA's investments in community development have levered support from a variety of partners: communities, provinces, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector. Community support is the key element for success of Community Economic Development investments and, ultimately, long-term viability. As communities become engaged in project development and implementation, they not only reap the benefits of that project, but establish economic development capacity that assists them to take a leadership role in their own long-term economic development.

Impact on the Atlantic Provinces, 2003-2008

The development of the Atlantic Canadian economy has been influenced by a number of factors over the past five years. International competition from emerging low-cost producers and a high exchange rate have challenged the region's manufacturing base and its seasonal industries. While resource-based industries continue to underpin parts of the economy, there has been diversification into new value-added products and services, and emerging knowledge-based sectors have become part of the region's economic landscape. ACOA has supported the development of several of these sectors as they sought growth opportunities and value-added activities.

Overall, Atlantic Canada's economy has performed well.

- Real gross domestic product (GDP) in Atlantic Canada expanded by an average of 2.0% annually between 2003 and 2007, highlighted by strong growth in both the mining and construction sectors.
- Employment in the region grew at an average of 1.1% annually over the past five years, as nearly 60,000 more people were employed in Atlantic Canada in 2007 compared with 2002. As a result, the unemployment rate fell steadily during this period, attaining 9.2% in 2007 – its lowest level in over 30 years.

- Commodity exports from Atlantic Canada rose by 47% between 2002 and 2007, driven by strong gains in exports of refined petroleum products, crude oil and minerals.
- Labour productivity growth in Atlantic Canada averaged 0.9% over the 2003 to 2007 period, keeping pace with national gains.
- While R&D levels in Atlantic Canada remain lower than the national average, they have improved over the past few years. According to the latest statistics, between 2000 and 2005, expenditures on R&D in Atlantic Canada rose by an annual average of 8.5%, ahead of the national increase of 6.2%.

ACOA has played a significant role in this success by adapting rapidly to the changing social and economic forces pressing on the region. Through its programming, ACOA has helped each of the Atlantic provinces to capitalize on opportunities related to its strengths.

- Newfoundland and Labrador's economy benefited from opportunities associated with its rich oil and mineral resources and expertise in ocean technologies.
- Prince Edward Island pursued further economic diversification through cluster development in the bio-resource, aerospace, information and communications technology, tourism and wind energy sectors.
- In Nova Scotia, the emergence of new industries, including the life sciences, information technology and financial sectors, bodes well for future job creation.
- In New Brunswick, several developments have positioned the province for sustained economic growth, relating to the energy, mining, aquaculture, and the business service sectors.

Newfoundland and Labrador

The Newfoundland and Labrador economy performed well over the past five years, with real GDP increasing by an average of 3.1%. This strong performance was mainly due to significant developments in the mining and oil industries, and the development of expertise in areas such as ocean technologies. The development of the \$2.4-billion White Rose offshore oil project and the \$2.9-billion Voisey's Bay nickel, copper and cobalt deposit in northern Labrador fuelled construction activity in the province and, along with gains from iron ore, significantly boosted oil and mineral production during the 2003 to 2007 period.

The value of mineral production in the province has increased substantially in the past several years, due to increased world commodity prices and increased production. ACOA's support of the industry aims to enhance R&D and maximize business opportunities. For example, the Agency committed \$23.1 million to Memorial University of Newfoundland to establish an innovation centre in the mining sector with a focus on research related to geosciences and process engineering. The research has resulted in process improvements at Vale Inco's operations in the province, new contract awards related to ore characterization, and progress on commercializing research in areas related to geosciences.

Newfoundland and Labrador produced 134 million barrels of oil in 2007, 14% of total Canadian production. The oil industry provides direct employment for 3,000 people, supports a significant number of local services and supply companies, and is responsible for an estimated 15% of annual real GDP. ACOA works with stakeholders to identify new opportunities, to attract investment and to address challenges related to the exploration and development of Newfoundland and Labrador's oil and gas resources. Some examples of recent ACOA-led studies include: *An Assessment of Atlantic Canada's Offshore vis-à-vis Competing Jurisdictions*, completed in partnership with Natural Resources Canada and Industry Canada, and *Location, Environmental and Other Factors Influencing Exploration and Development of Labrador Gas*, completed in partnership with oil and gas companies with an interest in offshore Labrador.

Newfoundland and Labrador's developing offshore oil industry has also provided a number of research and innovation opportunities for ocean technology industries related to ice management, marine communications and safety challenges. Growth of Newfoundland and Labrador's ocean technology industry has been substantial over the current decade. The number of private sector companies grew from 33



firms with \$117 million in sales in 2001, to more than 50 firms with \$230 million in sales in 2005. Private sector employment totalled 1,470 people in 2005 – up by more than 65% over 2001 employment numbers. The Agency has worked closely with the National Research Council's Institute of Ocean Technology (NRC-IOT), the Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and industry players to encourage collaboration and to build a sustainable ocean technology cluster in the province.

Ocean Technology Cluster Development Newfoundland and Labrador

The development of an ocean technology industry cluster in Newfoundland and Labrador was a priority of ACOA during the reporting period. The Agency has worked collaboratively with ocean technology stakeholders, including Memorial University of Newfoundland, ocean technology companies, the National Research Council of Canada, the City of St. John's and the provincial government to advance the sector.

A distinguishing feature of ACOA's strategy in this area is its close collaboration with oceans-mandated federal government departments to encourage made-in-Canada technology solutions to Canada's ocean management challenges.

Through the Agency's BDP and AIF programming, and through the federal Ocean Action Plan (2005-2007), ACOA has contributed significantly to growth within the sector. As of 2006, there were 52 companies in the ocean technology industry in Newfoundland and Labrador, representing an increase of 58% since 2001. Sixteen of these companies were newly formed. Employment in the industry increased by more than 62%, and the total revenues of companies in the industry nearly doubled from \$117 million to over \$225 million. The goal for the ocean technology cluster in the province is to grow into an industry worth \$1 billion annually within 10 years.

The ocean technologies cluster is catalyzing companies in Newfoundland and Labrador to build individual strengths into powerful collective efforts. More and more, the industry is assuming strategic leadership for the sector. The province sees this sector as a major element of its new economy.

L.G. O'Reilly
Executive Director
Oceans Advance

Prince Edward Island

Economic growth in Prince Edward Island averaged 2.3% between 2003 and 2007. The services-producing sectors performed well during this period, with the addition of information technology firms, call centres and financial services companies. The province continued to build on its

reputation as a leader in the development of renewable energy sources, as significant investments were undertaken to increase wind generating capacity through the addition of new wind farms. ACOA, in collaboration with Natural Resources Canada and Transport Canada, established the Wind Energy Institute of Canada in Prince Edward Island.

ACOA has also played an integral role in creating a bioscience cluster within the province. The Agency's investments have been the key to enabling private and public sector R&D institutions to develop the expertise and experience needed to promote this cluster. Development of new pharmaceutical products, sustainable production methods for marine biocompounds, development of erosion-resistant protective coatings for the aerospace industry, development of vaccines, the creation of new food and skin-care products using nutriscience, and health research for human neurodegenerative diseases are a few examples of the dynamic growth in this emerging sector.

The aerospace industry in Prince Edward Island has evolved in large part due to the creation of Slemon Park Corporation. Since its evolution in the early 1990s, this industry has become the province's second-largest producer of total exports, representing close to \$200 million in annual sales. Local companies like MDS-Prad and Atlantic Turbines International Inc. have been industry leaders in the knowledge-based economy. Leading-edge R&D has positioned MDS-Prad as one of the world's premier sources of protective coating products. With its development of world-class engine repair techniques, Atlantic Turbines International has become an industry leader in the areas of gas turbine engine maintenance and restoration.

Prince Edward Island's information technology cluster continues to strengthen thanks to the sum of its parts. Today's savvy entrepreneurs realize that innovative technology has proven to be the equalizer when it comes to delivering products and services worldwide. Business location has become irrelevant. ACOA's Atlantic Innovation Fund has enabled entrepreneurs to develop commercially viable software that can assist local governments and utilities in running their operations more efficiently; to create user-friendly and reliable e-health software for health providers in Canada and around the world; and to design multi-functional software applications for radiological information and imagery.

The Wind Energy Institute of Canada North Cape, Prince Edward Island

Together with the PEI Energy Corporation and Natural Resources Canada, ACOA has partnered with Resources West, the regional



economic development organization for western PEI, and the Wind Energy Institute (WEICan), a leading testing and research institute for wind energy systems, in pursuit of opportunities in the wind energy sector.

This partnership has resulted in a new 7,860-square-foot building equipped with laboratories and workshop areas designed to

meet the needs of both large- and small-scale projects relating to wind power generation. In addition, WEICan has signed a co-operation agreement with the German Wind Energy Institute to provide measurement services to the wind energy sector in North America.

This investment in the North Cape community represents an important contribution to the development of renewable energy sources and provides for economic diversification and greater economic stability in the local area.

Atlantic Canada has enormous wind energy potential and WEICan, as Canada's oldest and leading wind energy test site, has a central role to play in realizing that potential.

Scott Harper
WEICan Chief Executive Officer

Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia economy experienced moderate growth during the 2003 to 2007 period, averaging 1.4%. This growth was mainly driven by a growing service sector and strengthening retail sales. Within the services-producing sector, for example, significant expansion occurred in the financial services sector, as several offshore financial companies expanded or established operations in Halifax. ACOA contributed to this development through the Trade and Investment component of the Atlantic Investment Partnership. The Agency invested in promoting Nova Scotia as a location for international banks and IT companies. This resulted in the direct creation of jobs in the province.

Nova Scotia's manufacturing sector has been impacted significantly by the rising dollar, resulting in a loss of competitive position in the global market. However, the development of emerging sectors illustrates the progress being made in the region. These sectors include: information and communications technologies; biotechnology, life sciences and bioresources; aerospace and defence; advanced manufacturing; and marine technologies. Aerospace, in particular, is a bright spot in Nova Scotia, as firms are expanding and new projects are being developed.

Traditional resource-based industries are undergoing significant changes. For example, new value-added products in both the wood and food processing industries have allowed them to become much more export intensive.

The transformation of Nova Scotia's traditionally resource-based economy to an innovative and globally competitive, knowledge-based economy is ongoing, but poses many major social and economic challenges. For example, many of Nova Scotia's foundational industries (fisheries, forestry, agriculture and tourism) are struggling to adjust to rapidly increasing competition from other exporting countries. Success in these areas will depend largely on their ability to innovate and to increase productivity.

Rural areas, in particular, will be impacted by the effects of slow population growth and an aging population. These will combine to constrain the capacity for rural communities to maintain and increase economic expansion. More effort will be needed to ensure an adequate supply of labour.

ACOA has made significant investments in the research and development sectors of the Nova Scotia economy. Through investments under the Atlantic Innovation Fund, ACOA has facilitated public-private partnerships to develop technology that has high commercialization potential. In addition, ACOA has invested funds from the Business Development Program to help companies acquire new technology and adopt more productive methodologies. This will continue to be the focus for ACOA going forward.

ACOA is a partner to companies and researchers in the life sciences sector and has supported several projects in this area. The Nova Scotia Life Sciences Asset Map estimates that in 2005, there were approximately 50 core life sciences companies in Nova Scotia with close to 500 products competing in the global marketplace. Collectively, these products generated more than \$181 million in sales, most of these in the sub-sectors of functional foods and nutraceuticals, pharmaceuticals and agriculture. Virtually all of the province's products in the life sciences are exported, with four major companies responsible for more than 85% of total sales.

**ImmunoVaccine Technologies Inc.
Halifax, Nova Scotia**

ImmunoVaccine Technologies Inc. (IVT) is a biotechnology company that grew out of research originally developed in a university laboratory. The company was incorporated in 2000 to commercialize vaccine research development at Dalhousie University in Halifax.

What is great about ACOA's support is that it has helped our company leverage further investment in ImmunoVaccine. ACOA recognizes that we have developed a major breakthrough technology that will have a very positive impact on the biotechnology sector in Atlantic Canada.

Brian Lowe
Vice-President
ImmunoVaccine Technologies Inc.

IVT is collaborating with partners such as Dalhousie University, the Atlantic Veterinary College and the Nova Scotia Agricultural College to develop a biological technology that works to stimulate the immune system by enabling the body to create more effective antibodies. This technology, now trademarked as VacciMax[®], has both human and animal applications. For example, IVT's first line of marketable products from its proprietary platform is SpayVac – a single dose contraceptive vaccine for controlling domestic pet and wildlife fertility. IVT is also working with international experts and partners to develop a vaccine delivery platform capable of 100% tumour elimination in pre-clinical cancer models.

Under the AIF, ACOA is investing over \$3 million toward a \$10-million innovation project of IVT to further develop the company's vaccine platform. It is expected that specific vaccine products resulting from the project will include products for the prevention of human infectious diseases and human therapeutic vaccines for the treatment of diseases.

New Brunswick

The New Brunswick economy was confronted with various challenges between 2003 and 2007, particularly those faced by the forest and non-energy manufacturing sectors due to the appreciation of the Canadian dollar and the slowdown in the U.S. economy. Despite these challenges, New Brunswick's economy performed well, reflecting its growing diversity.

Between 2003 and 2007, the New Brunswick economy grew by an average 2.0% per year. Investment has been the principal driver of growth during the past five years, with two megaprojects dominating investment in non-residential construction: the refurbishment of the Point Lepreau nuclear generating station and the construction of the Canaport liquefied natural gas terminal in Saint John. In 2007, overall, capital investment reached \$6.0 billion, a 5.4% increase over 2006 and the highest level on record.

With strong gains in the information technology, finance and insurance, and the retail and wholesale trade sectors, the province's services-producing industries played a major part in economic growth.

While the economy has performed well overall, economic growth and expansion is unequally distributed throughout the province. New Brunswick's rural communities continue to face significant challenges including exposure to serious disruptions due to trade disputes, resource rationalization, a higher Canadian dollar, and higher commodity prices.

ACOA has made strategic investments in New Brunswick's key economic sectors to facilitate full participation in the province's current economic expansion. For example, ACOA has made critical investments in New Brunswick's aquaculture industry, which focus on innovation and technology, productivity and business skills development, and capacity building and marketing. These investments have led to employment creation and diversification of the region's rural and coastal communities.

ACOA also created the Chaleur-Restigouche Initiative, a three-year effort to assist SMEs in the northeast region of New Brunswick to adjust to the closure of the Brunswick Mine and Smelter, as well as the downturn in the forestry sector. Among its notable accomplishments, ACOA undertook extensive assessments of 149 potential SME clients, which led

to projects with 40 SMEs to develop new products, find new national and international markets, and improve their management skills – particularly in the areas of trade and innovation.

In New Brunswick, ACOA will continue to facilitate full participation in the economy by making investments that build and capitalize on local capacity, foster economic diversification, and help communities transition beyond traditional economic activity.

Huntsman Marine Science Centre St. Andrews, New Brunswick

The Huntsman Marine Science Centre (HMSC) in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, highlights the benefits of ACOA's efforts and programming in rural areas.

The HMSC plays an important role in conducting research vital to the local economy and to coastal resource use and management in Atlantic Canada. Within the context of the development of the fisheries and

aquaculture sector in Atlantic Canada, HMSC's large-scale fish holding and breeding facilities for marine and freshwater fish enable research and development by commercial companies and scientists.

ACOA has helped us enhance our facility, research new processes, develop new strategic alliances and advance our research into commercial uses. Their support has been invaluable to our work.

Bill Robertson
Executive Director
Huntsman Marine Science Centre

ACOA's investment through the Innovative Communities Fund (ICF) and the Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF) have assisted in the creation of a research partnership involving the HMSC, the University of New Brunswick, Acadia University, Genome Atlantic, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. This partnership represents a strategic investment in community

development in Charlotte County, where the cluster of aquaculture-related activities has brought vital economic diversification to the area.

Section 2

Organized for Results

ACOA was created in 1987 as a new model for economic development in which decision-making resided in the region. Programs were to be designed for and by Atlantic Canadians. As Donald Savoie stated in his 1987 report, *Establishing the Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency*, a dedicated agency within the region “hold[s] the most promise for concrete results.” This model necessitated a decentralized approach. The ACOA headquarters is in Moncton, New Brunswick, with offices in each of the four Atlantic provinces and one in Ottawa.

ACOA is a regional leader in conducting economic policy research. It acts as a champion for Atlantic Canada, bringing intelligence about the region’s strengths, interests and concerns to the centre, while ensuring that the federal government’s priorities reflect the needs of Atlantic Canada. Through its Ottawa office, ACOA advocates the interests of Atlantic Canadians in the development of national policies and programs, and procurement opportunities.

Within its broad mandate under the *Government Organization Act, Atlantic Canada, 1987*, the Agency works to create opportunities for economic growth in Atlantic Canada by helping businesses become more competitive, innovative and productive; by working with communities to develop and diversify local economies; and by championing the strengths of Atlantic Canada.

While ACOA continues to support the start-up and growth of SMEs, it also encourages the commercialization of homegrown research and development, the growth of existing and new industry sectors, increased exports and investment, and sustainable communities. ACOA works with communities by providing resources that enable them to implement their

own investment and infrastructure strategies. The Agency also works to address the current demographic challenges by working with partners on strategies to enhance the opportunities for the skills of existing residents while attracting new skilled workers to the region.

Linking ACOA's and the Government of Canada's Economic Priorities

Over the last five years, ACOA's strategies have been driven by key national and regional priorities, the continuing impact of globalization of markets, and the need to strengthen Canada's economy through improved productivity, competitiveness and innovation.

The Government of Canada has pursued a strategy that invests in skilled knowledge workers and cutting-edge research and innovation to help regions exploit opportunities in the global economy. ACOA has supported this strategy through the Atlantic Investment Partnership, aligning its programs to support the Government's priority to help create an environment in which Canadians can prosper.

Our goal is to ensure that every part of the country has the chance to benefit from the enormous economic opportunities that lie before Canada.

The Right Honourable
Stephen Harper
Fredericton, New Brunswick
June 25, 2007

With *Advantage Canada*, our Government has laid out a sensible economic plan to secure better-paying jobs and solid growth for Canadians.

In 2006, the Government of Canada announced a long-term economic plan to build a strong Canadian economy and make Canada's quality of life second to none. *Advantage Canada* focused on creating a tax advantage, a fiscal advantage, a knowledge advantage, an entrepreneurial advantage, and an infrastructure advantage for Canadians.

Speech from the Throne,
October 16, 2007

The Agency's activities support the knowledge, entrepreneurial and infrastructure elements of Canada's long-term economic plan. In the period 2003 to 2008, the Agency's activities focused on:

- promoting commercialization of leading-edge research;
- supporting private sector and university innovation partnerships;
- assisting projects involving business expansion, modernization and productivity and business skills enhancements;
- supporting and promoting essential infrastructure and trade initiatives such as the Atlantic Gateway;

- assuming a leadership role in the development of regional strategies such as a population strategy that focuses on attraction, retention, labour integration and developing skills to meet the needs of the new economy; and
- engaging communities in local economic development planning and initiatives that support local business and industry development and invest in key economic development infrastructure.

Chapter 3

How ACOA pursues Its Mandate

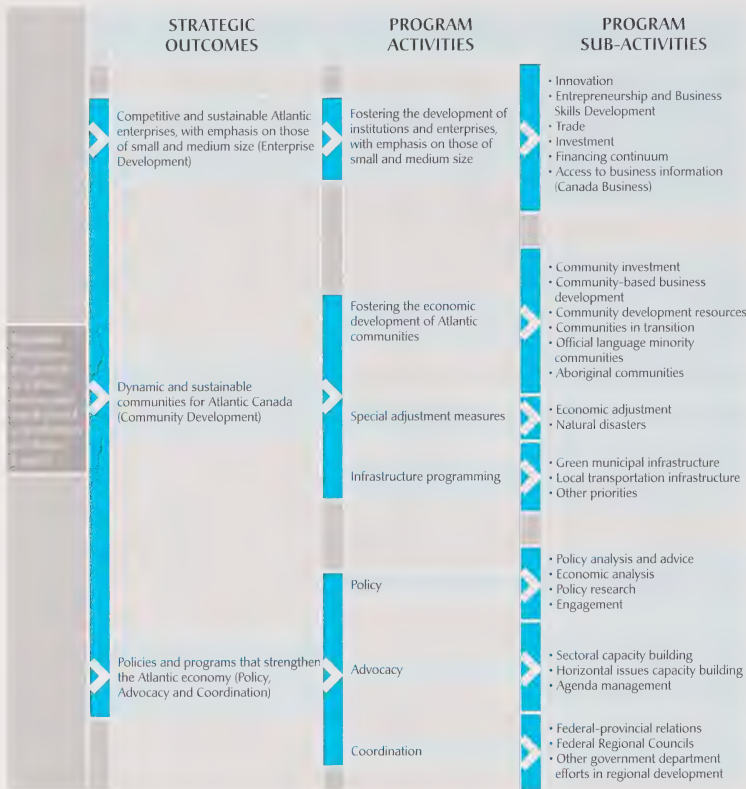
ACOA has identified three strategic areas of activity that reflect its mission and the benefits it strives to provide to Atlantic Canadians.

These are:

- **Enterprise Development** – improved growth and competitiveness of Atlantic enterprises with emphasis on those of small and medium size; and fostering the development of infrastructure leading to increased productivity, earned incomes and job creation.
- **Community Development** – improved community economic infrastructure and strategic planning capacity, leading to improved employment opportunities and economic growth in Atlantic Canada.
- **Policy, Advocacy and Coordination** – strategic, researched policy positions that reflect the region's potential, ensuring regional influence on national policies and programs that affect Atlantic Canadian development and interests, and facilitating the coordination of other federal policies and programs within the region to form more effective, integrated approaches to the region's economic development.

These three strategic outcomes are outlined in ACOA's Program Activity Architecture as illustrated in Figure 3. It reflects the results of policy research and analysis; periodic review of program effectiveness; ongoing dialogue with other stakeholders in the region; and the priorities and directions of the Government of Canada.

Figure 3



The program activities and sub-activities supporting these outcomes are described in detail in the chapters that follow.

Partners

The Agency is committed to helping the region become its own engine of economic growth. To that end, ACOA works in partnership with a variety of government, business, academic and community stakeholders toward the long-term development of the region. Partners include:

- the business sector;
- community-based economic development organizations and voluntary groups;
- universities and colleges;
- research institutes;
- other federal government departments;
- provincial governments;

- First Nation communities; and
- municipalities.

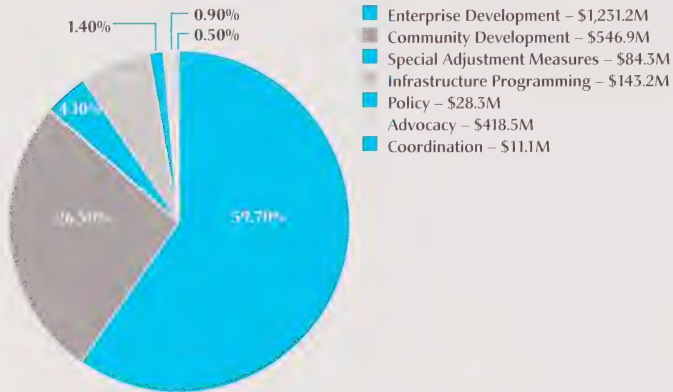
ACOA's work with these partners involves a variety of activities, including the following.

- Working with provincial and municipal levels of government to advance the priorities of the Government of Canada while advocating regional interests and priorities in Ottawa.
- Engaging the private sector in research initiatives and as partners in commercialization initiatives.
- Working with universities and research institutes to advance the region's innovation agenda, enhance the region's participation in Canada's innovation strategy and to ensure the region's participation in the national programs of the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the National Research Council, the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and Genome Canada.
- Collaborating with a variety of locally based organizations such as Community Business Development Corporations, Regional Economic Development Organizations (REDOs), other levels of government, and not-for-profit organizations, in order to advance community economic development.
- Engaging in broad-based initiatives with the tourism industry through the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership, best practices missions, and the Atlantic Canada Technology Initiative.
- Collaborating as the lead federal partner with Atlantic provincial governments on export trade development initiatives, notably through Team Canada Atlantic trade missions and the Canada-Atlantic Provinces Agreement on International Business Development.
- Collaborating with Transport Canada, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Atlantic provincial governments and industry stakeholders to promote the Atlantic Gateway.

Resources

Agency spending over the five-year period of this report was \$2.1 billion, which includes \$143.2 million from Infrastructure Canada programming and statutory transfer payments¹ of \$5.9 million.

2003-2008 Agency Spending by Program Activity



¹ Statutory transfer payments include liabilities in 2003-2004 under the *Small Business Loans Act* and the *Canada Small Business Financing Act*. Since that time, these liabilities in Atlantic Canada have been reported by Industry Canada.

Chapter 4

Enterprise Development

4.1 Overview

Central to ACOA's mandate is the development of enterprises in Atlantic Canada – particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). SMEs comprise over 90% of Atlantic Canadian businesses. The Agency's role, therefore, is critical to the region's growth of earned incomes, employment and a higher standard of living.

Productivity and competitiveness
– a major focus for enterprise
development.

The Agency recognizes that enterprise development must focus on productivity and competitiveness to ensure success in domestic and export markets. A number of factors that contribute to lower levels of productivity in Atlantic Canada (relative to the national economy) are being addressed by ACOA's programming. These include the need to increase firms' ability to innovate, to increase R&D spending, to improve levels of business skills, to participate in international trade and to adopt new technologies including investments in machinery and equipment.

ACOA has implemented a comprehensive approach that addresses:

- **Innovation** in product development and productivity improvements, which are major building blocks for enterprise competitiveness.
- **Trade/Investment** in the international marketplace, because export development is essential for business growth, while foreign direct investment expands the region's economic base and growth potential.
- **Entrepreneurship and business skills development**, which is essential for long-term business success.

- **Financing continuum** to correct gaps in the financial offering to SMEs, either by providing direct financing or by working with other financial providers to better address the capital needs of SMEs at various stages of their business life cycle.
- **Access to business information (Canada Business)** for Atlantic Canadians interested in starting or growing a business.

ACOA offers a broad range of programs and services to improve the climate for business growth – from ensuring that business development tools and resources are available to Atlantic Canadian entrepreneurs throughout all stages of the business life cycle, to working with educational institutions, business support organizations and other government departments in the development and delivery of policies and programs.

Business Survival Rate: Small Firms (fewer than 20 workers)

Source: Statistics Canada



ACOA's Impact on Business Survival of SMEs

A company's survival depends on many factors including the age of the business, location and size. In Atlantic Canada, 87% of firms are in the small size category (fewer than 20 workers); 80% of ACOA's start-up clients fall into this category. The impact of ACOA programming is evident. The business survival rate for ACOA clients in the small category is 46% after the crucial fifth year following start-up. In the absence of ACOA support, the business survival rate would have been 13 percentage points lower.

ACOA's Impact on Gross Domestic Product

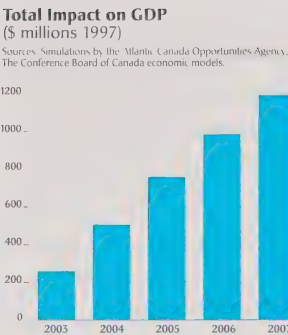
It is estimated that real GDP is \$1.2 billion higher (in constant 1997 dollars) in 2007 than it would have been in the absence of ACOA's direct support of businesses. (Real GDP is the inflation-adjusted value-added of products and services produced in a given year in an economy.)

The sector most affected by the Agency's support is the manufacturing sector. In fact, about 50% of commercial projects supported by ACOA were in the manufacturing sector. Consequently, manufacturing output is \$312 million higher in 2007 in Atlantic Canada than it would have been without ACOA's support.

ACOA’s approach has helped create a business environment that allows SMEs to become competitive and sustainable. As evidenced by the following examples, the Agency’s programs and initiatives have a direct impact on the success of SMEs.

**C-Vision Ltd.
Amherst, Nova Scotia**

C-Vision is an innovative, rural-based electronics and manufacturing company that demonstrates how an innovative company does not necessarily have to be located in a large urban centre to be successful. The company also demonstrates that innovation and productivity are the keys to remaining competitive. C-Vision is headquartered in Amherst, Nova Scotia, and employs a local workforce of approximately 95 people. It provides Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) with printed circuit-board assembly, box build, system integration, prototyping and mock-ups, materials management, logistics and fulfillment.



Charles Cartmill, founder and president of C-Vision Ltd.

The company exports almost 90% of its products to markets around the world and competes successfully against suppliers in Asia and elsewhere. It is also a leader in environmental manufacturing – the second company in Canada to produce lead-free circuit boards.

ACOA has worked with C-Vision to develop its products, markets, skills capacity and innovative capacity. Through projects under ACOA’s Innovation Skills Development Program, C-Vision has upgraded its R&D and technical project management capacity. C-Vision’s participation in ACOA-led trade missions – one to Paris and the other to Boston – have enabled the company to expand its market base and exposure.

Electronics is one of the most competitive industries in the world. However, with the right people, systems and equipment, Atlantic Canada can compete. We're living proof of that.

Chuck Cartmill
Owner and Founder
C-Vision Ltd

In 2007, C-Vision began a \$2-million R&D project, supported by ACOA's Atlantic Innovation Fund, to produce Light Emitting Diode (LED) roadway lighting. LED lighting is energy efficient and has a longer life span than conventional lighting. Cost savings of comparable systems can be as much as 85%.

The Lean Manufacturing Initiative New Brunswick

In this reporting period, ACOA developed and implemented the Lean Manufacturing Initiative in New Brunswick.

The objective was to help companies improve operational efficiency and address productivity challenges in order to improve their overall competitiveness. Results of a 2006 impact assessment indicated that the firms participating in this initiative showed significant growth, with an increase in the number of full-time employees, an increase in gross revenues, and an increase in gross revenues per full-time employee of more than \$20,000.

The Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership

In many instances, the Agency plays an important coordination role that results in effective partnerships in a specific sector of the Atlantic Canadian economy. An example of such a partnership is the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership (ACTP).

The \$20-million ACTP brings a regional, co-operative approach to promoting Atlantic Canada as a premier tourism destination in key international markets. The group is a nine-member, pan-Atlantic partnership consisting of ACOA; the provincial departments responsible for tourism in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador; and the four provincial tourism industry associations.

Since its inception, this multi-member partnership has executed successful research-driven consumer advertising campaigns in key international markets such as New England, the Mid-Atlantic States, the United Kingdom, France, Japan, Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Tourism marketing efforts undertaken by the ACTP have achieved significant results for Atlantic Canada. This partnership model works and the ACTP's track record proves it. Its 2003-2006 international marketing investments generated \$16.83 in tourism-related spending for every \$1 spent on marketing. In 2007, the ACTP generated \$87 million in tourism revenue for Atlantic Canada, or \$17 for every dollar invested in international marketing campaigns.

4.2 Innovation

Innovation and stronger innovative capacity through research and development and the deployment of technology are fundamental to the region's productivity and competitiveness. Atlantic Canada's labour productivity, which is critical to increasing incomes and creating wealth, has historically been below the national level. This is partly due to industrial structure and partly to lower levels of investment in research and development, technology, educational attainment and worker training.

One of ACOA's key priorities is helping SMEs to increase productivity and improve their competitive position. Whether it is for a new business or the expansion or modernization of an existing one, the Agency invests in companies, thereby enabling them to make process improvements, reduce waste generation, acquire new technology, train their workers and develop managerial skills. Stronger businesses result in new investments in the region and contribute to employment creation and increased earned income.

Labour productivity, which is estimated using the inflation-adjusted sales per worker, experienced stalwart growth from 2001 to 2005. More specifically, productivity increased by 6.4% per year for ACOA clients, while comparable firms experienced a decline of 0.5% based on Statistics Canada data. Moreover, sales of small and medium-sized ACOA clients have increased at a solid rate from 2001 to 2005, rising by an average of 4.7% per year. Comparable firms have averaged sales growth of only 2.1% during the same time period.

ACOA executes its innovation strategy through two programming tools: the Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF) and the Business Development Program (BDP). Together, these programs support ACOA's objective

of increasing innovative capacity, ultimately leading to productivity improvement. The five key areas of ACOA's Innovation Strategy are:

- Strengthening Innovation Systems;
- Supporting Strategic Sectors;
- Building Innovation Capacity;
- Addressing Skills Gaps; and
- Policy Development and Coordination.

Strengthening Innovation Systems and Strategic Sector Support

ACOA focuses on accelerating the development of knowledge-based industries and facilitating transition within traditional industries by increasing the region's capacity to carry out leading-edge research and development. First established in July 2000, the AIF was designed for this purpose. An additional \$300 million was committed to the fund in July 2005. An independent AIF Advisory Board, composed of regional leaders in business and academia, reviews all AIF proposals and provides recommendations to ACOA.

The AIF invests in research and development and related initiatives, primarily in the natural and applied sciences. These initiatives must be directly linked to the development of technology-based products, processes or services that can be successfully introduced into the marketplace.

In order to maximize the return on investment to Atlantic Canada, ACOA supports projects that offer the best opportunity for future growth. These projects are typically found in sectors where Atlantic Canada has a demonstrated competitive advantage and in emerging clusters of knowledge-based firms. These include information technology (notably geomatics and communications), ocean technologies, aquaculture, bio-technology, health and medical technologies, and environmental technologies.

AIF investments also aim to strengthen the region's ability to develop technologies that enable resource-based industries such as oil and gas, aquaculture and agri-food, fisheries, forestry and mining to upgrade and enhance their competitiveness.

An evaluation of the AIF program – intended to assess the progress to date, build on what was working well and identify areas for improvement – was completed in 2004. Among key findings, the AIF is:

- leveraging additional investment in R&D for every dollar invested;
- increasing R&D capacity in the region;
- strengthening linkages within Atlantic Canada's innovation system; and
- promoting collaborative research and technology commercialization.

Since April 1, 2003, via its Innovation element, the BDP has funded over 230 R&D projects, involving more than \$70 million in assistance. It has supported more than 85 technology adoption/adaptation projects involving more than \$21 million in assistance. This financial support from ACOA has leveraged more than \$245 million in investments from other sources.



The commercialization potential of R&D in Atlantic Canada continues to grow. The AIF has been instrumental in helping to move R&D from the laboratory to the marketplace. In the five competitive rounds of the AIF program:

- 627 proposals were received, requesting \$1.96 billion in funding for projects valued at \$3.7 billion.
- 192 projects were approved, involving \$521 million in AIF investments for projects valued at \$1.2 billion.
- The percentage of institutional projects (universities and colleges) with a private sector partner has increased significantly, from 67% in Round I to 92% in Round V.

Clearly, the private sector plays the leading role in the commercialization of technology. Under the AIF, the proportion of commercially led innovation projects has, for the most part, increased markedly with successive rounds (*it should also be noted that Round 1 occurred previous to the five-year reporting period 2003-2008*):

- 36% of Round I in 2002;
- 46% in Round II in 2003;
- 52% in Round III in 2006;
- 66% in Round IV in 2007; and
- 55% in Round V in 2008.

The AIF investments in these commercially led projects are also leveraging significant financing from private sector partners and investors for the commercialization of technology, a key objective of the AIF.

A complete listing of AIF projects approved to date can be found on ACOA's website at <http://www.acoa.ca/e/financial/aif/index.shtml>. 

Building Capacity and Innovation Partnerships

To encourage SMEs to build innovative capacity, the benefits of undertaking innovation activities must be effectively communicated. Key components must be well-linked and promote interaction among all players. Taken together, the region's innovation system is strengthened, leading to increased R&D and the delivery of products to the market. ACOA recognized that the region's universities possess strong R&D capabilities and that a partnership with the private sector could lead to increased commercialization opportunities. The AIF program was designed to accelerate R&D within the universities, to encourage collaboration among them, and to facilitate partnerships between academic research and business development. By raising awareness of the benefits of undertaking innovation activities and by promoting improved interaction among the innovation players, ACOA has helped strengthen the region's innovation system, resulting in partnerships between academic research and business development, increased R&D and commercialization of research.

One such partnership is Springboard Atlantic. To assist regional universities in identifying and capitalizing on commercial activities, ACOA collaborated with 14 universities and other stakeholders to create and sustain a technology transfer network that supports the commercialization of university research in Atlantic Canada. ACOA was acknowledged by the OECD in its 2007 report, *Higher Education and the Regions* where

Research and development is growing in Atlantic Canada and ACOA is a significant contributor. From 2000 to 2004, spending on industrial R&D in Atlantic Canada grew from \$132 million to \$204 million. In 2004, spending on industrial R&D by ACOA clients represented a significant share of total R&D spending in Atlantic Canada, equalling 38%.

(Source: Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division, Statistics Canada)

"Springboard members are finding that this way of working opens doors to allow large-scale collaborations and partnerships with industry, the venture capital community and public organizations such as the National Research Council," said Dr. Axel Meisen, [former] President of Memorial University of Newfoundland and [former] Chair of the Association of Atlantic Universities. "Springboard also gives us a seat at the table to develop national policy regarding innovation and technology commercialization. By uniting the resources of the universities in Atlantic Canada, we achieve the critical mass essential to success."

the Springboard Atlantic initiative was underlined as a unique network for promoting research and its commercialization. The OECD noted that, through Springboard, knowledge “is mobilized for the benefit of economic development and to embrace the smaller universities that are unable to support a commercialization function.” According to the report, the AIF has “proven to be a catalyst in encouraging partnerships among businesses and the research community, including higher education institutions.”

Following are several examples of ACOA clients that are successfully contributing to strengthening innovation systems in Atlantic Canada. Many of these firms have benefited from more than one of ACOA’s programs in the diverse aspects of innovation.

**Cathexis Innovations Inc.
St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador**

Cathexis is a privately held firm that has made the challenging transition from a primary focus on research and development to a successful market-oriented operation. It is an excellent example of how ACOA can help with this transition.

The company offers ID Blue, the world’s first mobile, Bluetooth-enabled Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) reader. RFIDs enable more efficient data collection and analysis, with applications ranging from inventory management to security control.

ACOA first provided support for management and marketing development under the BDP. In January 2008, Cathexis was awarded \$2.69 million under the AIF to further develop the ID Blue product. The \$5.69-million project will involve R&D to introduce miniaturization, power management and advanced communications as well as RFID software opportunities. Notably, the project will involve global partners including Microsoft Corporation and the Centre of Excellence for Applied Research and Training in the United Arab Emirates. The company has also secured a major private equity placement of \$2.5 million to assist in the financing of its growth and commercialization strategies.

We’re one of only six companies worldwide to have an RFID hardware partnership with the company (Microsoft), and we’re the only one that has a wireless RFID reader. We are very proud of that and it gives us a lot of visibility in the marketplace.

Steve Taylor
CEO, Cathexis Innovation Inc.

IT Interactive Services Inc. Halifax, Nova Scotia

IT Interactive Services Inc. (ITIS) is an example of an innovative, Internet-based company. It grew from a three-person, owner-operated enterprise employing 20 people with sales of \$6 million to a company employing 33 people with forecasted sales of \$27 million. ITIS is a leading developer and provider of performance-based marketing services for the Internet. The company's brands – including GenieKnows.com, GenieKnows.co.uk, and GenieKnowsGames.com – have become widely known and respected, offering users focused, category-based search results.

ITIS is built on innovative technologies and has invested heavily in R&D. It has partnered with Dalhousie University to conduct R&D, and in 2007, it began a research project valued at more than \$2 million and supported under the AIF to develop enhancements to one of its current technologies, GenieKnows.com. The enhancements will improve the user interface, providing more personal customization options. ACOA has also supported ITIS to enhance its productivity and marketing capacity through projects under the Business Development Program and Innovation Skills Development Initiative.

"The time is right for this food inspection technology," says Paul Hearn, Managing Director of Baader-Canpolar Inc. "The key is in the software. With help from the Atlantic Innovation Fund, we've been able to automate to a high level of quality and safety in food products."

Baader-Canpolar Inc. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

Baader-Canpolar Inc. (BCI) was incorporated in 1999 as a joint venture between Canpolar East and Baader Canada Inc., specializing in food inspection systems. The company's vision inspection system, which incorporates a patented technology, detects a range of defects in fish fillets and poultry.

To meet emerging industry demands for higher levels of food defect detection, BCI made technical advancements

in its core inspection technology through a combination of improved imaging techniques, software analysis and the addition of X-ray capabilities. In 2004 the company was successful in securing AIF support (\$2.5 million) for the development and assembly of advanced food inspection systems. BCI works in partnership with Intelligent System Solutions, an independent Newfoundland and Labrador company specializing in intelligent system research.

With help from ACOA, BCI has been successful in bringing its research and development to commercialization. The company officially launched its poultry inspection technology at the international poultry show in the United States, in February 2007.

BioVectra Inc. (formerly known as Diagnostic Chemicals Limited)
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

BioVectra Inc., initially a home-based business that manufactured small amounts of a specialty chemical known as INT dye, has grown considerably in size and product development since it first began operations in 1970. The company that Dr. Regis Duffy founded became one of the world's leading developers and manufacturers of high-value chemical reagents and analytical kits for doctors, laboratories and hospitals across North America, employing over 200 people and producing no fewer than 200 products. Sales for the year ending August 31, 2007, exceeded \$36 million.

BioVectra has been a role-model ACOA client and has benefited from a number of ACOA programs. ACOA's overall investment in BioVectra amounts to almost \$8 million against total project costs of over \$26 million, and BioVectra has fulfilled its obligations on payback of the ACOA investment and employment creation.

In December 2007, all assets of BioVectra's diagnostic division were sold to Genzyme Corporation and Genzyme Diagnostics PEI Inc. The large biotechnology company has a keen interest in expanding its presence in PEI's growing bioscience cluster.

"Thanks to ACOA investments, BioVectra Inc. is in a greater position to more fully service the biopharmaceutical industry worldwide," said the company's founder and chairman Regis Duffy. "With enhanced manufacturing capabilities and support to develop new pharmaceutical products, the company has been able to meet increased demand from both new and existing customers."

BioVectra Inc. continues to build its capacity and move into novel, strategic areas of business development. For example, one of its AIF projects, PEGylation of Biomolecules, is approximately 90% complete and BioVectra has already successfully developed and manufactured products having considerable sales potential.

Addressing Innovation Skills Gaps

To address skills gaps, ACOA provides support for managerial and technical skills development required for SMEs to implement

From 2003 to 2006, ACOA funded nearly \$30 million in 450 ISDI projects to:

- enhance SMEs' innovation and technology management capabilities;
 - increase the region's pool of experienced technology managers and technical expertise; and
 - retain more qualified science and technology graduates, linking them with SMEs in the region.
-

productivity improvement measures and manage innovation projects. The Innovation Skills Development Initiative (ISDI), introduced in 2000, was designed for this purpose. A 2005 evaluation of the ISDI concluded that the program helped to augment business skill levels among the region's SMEs.

Building on this success, and given the strong demand for assistance for innovation, the Agency launched the Productivity and Business Skills Initiative (PBSI) in 2006. This initiative broadens the scope of the ISDI by investing in the development and recruitment of better business skills, in addition to technical skills. In the first year, over 165 projects were funded involving more than \$6 million in assistance.

Green Imaging Technologies Inc. Fredericton, New Brunswick

ACOA's productivity and business skills investments have allowed companies such as Green Imaging Technologies Inc. (GIT) of Fredericton, New Brunswick, to become investor-ready and raise the commercialization capital required to launch state-of-the-art Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) technology for the petroleum industry.

This technology will offer the petroleum industry a faster, less expensive technology with which to perform reservoir core testing measurements. The result will be increased and better information that will reduce uncertainty for drilling plans.

Since the product launch in September 2007 at the International Symposium of the Society of Core Analysts, GIT has received a number of requests for proposals from oil companies worldwide. In addition, the company is in discussion with the largest core testing equipment manufacturer in the world for possible inclusion of the GIT technology in its equipment.

4.3 Trade/Investment

Trade

ACOA's trade objective is to increase export capacity and sales of SMEs in Atlantic Canada. The Agency helps to prepare new exporters to access international markets and provides current exporters with the support required to maintain and increase their exporting capabilities. ACOA utilizes a variety of programs, activities and partnerships, which covers the length of the export continuum, beginning with export-readiness.

ACOA's strategy for strengthening the export performance of SMEs in the region is based on four main elements. The first element, awareness, promotes exporting as a growth strategy for SMEs. It enhances their knowledge of trade issues and opportunities, and ensures that customers in export markets are aware of the capability of Atlantic Canadian SMEs. The Agency works with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, the four Atlantic provincial governments and key industry stakeholders to promote export awareness and support regional initiatives such as the Team Canada Atlantic market awareness sessions.

The second element of ACOA's trade development strategy is trade education and business skills development within SMEs. The Agency supports training and mentoring activities tailored to the specific requirements of existing and potential exporters. These activities also help to develop a network of capable trade consultants in the private sector who work with SMEs in the region.

Between 2003 and 2008, the Agency funded over 660 export development projects for SMEs through initiatives such as the Export Partnering Program in New Brunswick. This program provided mentoring, training and in-market experience for more than 50 New Brunswick firms.

The third element of the strategy, capacity building, assists companies in undertaking international market expansion and product development. The Agency undertakes trade analysis and research in collaboration with federal stakeholders, including Canadian missions abroad, and has been active in the organization of trade missions to select U.S., European and Asian markets. Sectors of focus have included aquaculture and seafood

for Europe and China; aerospace and defence opportunities in Europe; and technology and venture capital partnerships in the United States.

The fourth element of ACOA's trade development strategy concerns the policy, advocacy and coordination activities. Through its advocacy activities, ACOA works to ensure that Atlantic Canada's economic interests are reflected in Canada's trade policies and programs.

LuminUltra Technologies Ltd. is a New Brunswick business whose development has benefited from access to ACOA's trade and investment programming.

LuminUltra Technologies Ltd. Fredericton, New Brunswick

LuminUltra's participation in the Export Partnering Program in 2006 enabled the company to make significant inroads into the U.S. market. The company specializes in biological monitoring technologies that detect and measure micro-organisms in water. Biological monitoring of water is fundamental to protecting public health and the environment. The Export Partnering Program, an initiative of the Atlantic Investment Partnership, is designed to help SMEs acquire the skills required to become export savvy and enter strategic international markets.

The company received an order in July 2007 from one of the largest water and wastewater utilities in the U.S. – a direct result of a meeting that was facilitated during an ACOA trade mission in May 2007.

The opportunity to participate in the Export Partnering Program, and especially the experience we gained from the EP [Export Partnering] trade mission to Boston, has been invaluable in the development of market opportunities for LuminUltra in New England. I must say that the federal government's resources, which were made available to us through the Canadian Consul and ACOA, were nothing short of fantastic!

Phil Whalen
Owner, LuminUltra

Major Accomplishments over the 2003-2008 period

The Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which was announced in May 2002, has provided support for Team Canada Atlantic

missions, sector export strategies, trade and education skills development, export internships and tourism development.

Team Canada Atlantic trade and investment missions (TCA) have enabled an estimated 531 companies to meet more than 3,665 buyers, agents and business owners in

25 sector export strategies have been developed since the beginning of the Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership in 2002.

the United States. As a result these companies have generated in excess of \$45 million in immediate sales. The missions place particular emphasis on markets on the eastern seaboard of the United States. Typically, up to 40 exporting businesses, drawn from a variety of sectors, take part in these events. In the 2003-2008 (April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2008) period, ACOA led seven trade missions that resulted in over \$14.32 million in immediate-export sales.

The International Business Development Agreement is a partnership between the federal government (ACOA, Industry Canada, and Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada) and the four Atlantic provincial governments. The Agreement supports a variety of trade development activities. Between 2003 and 2008, over \$4.6 million was invested in approximately 500 companies. A recent client survey reported:

- 27% started exporting to new markets;
- 40% increased their volume of exports to existing markets; and
- 18% identified new markets for export growth.

The Business Development Program (BDP) provides support to SMEs including support for marketing plans and activities. Between 2003 and 2008, over \$99 million was invested in SMEs to help them meet export market opportunities; this has helped 53 firms to become first-time exporters.

Since 2003, more than 4,000 firms have increased their export readiness. Export readiness represents the first step in the export continuum leading to export sales. Once companies become export ready, they are positioned to expand through sales to export markets. The Agency's work in promoting and developing export readiness has enabled Team Canada Atlantic missions to engage over 230 Atlantic SMEs in the period 2003-2007. These missions, implemented in 1999, have enabled approximately 490 firms from Atlantic Canada to generate more than \$41 million in immediate sales.

According to Statistics Canada data, exports by small and medium-sized ACOA clients increased from \$537 million in 2000 to \$959 million in 2005. This represents an average growth in exports of 12.3% per year. Exports for comparable firms declined from \$1.1 billion to \$811 million during the same time period, falling by an average of 5.9% annually. ACOA plays an important role in terms of exports by SMEs, as ACOA

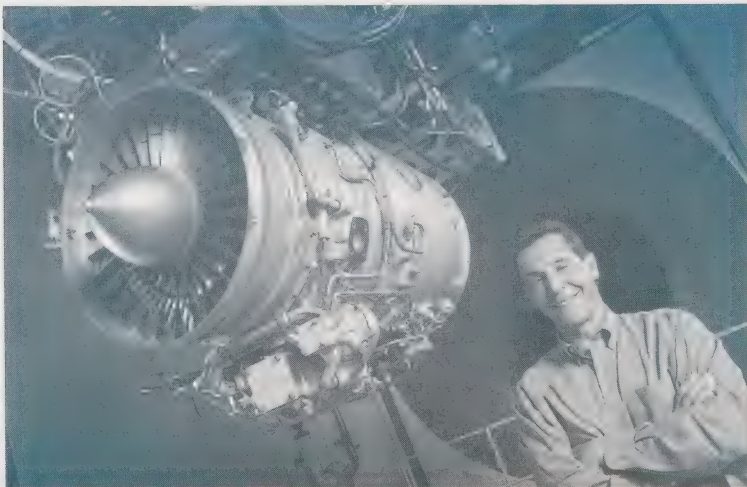
clients accounted for 54% of exports by all of Atlantic Canada's SMEs in 2005.

**Atlantic Turbines International Inc.
Summerside, Prince Edward Island**

Atlantic Turbines International Inc. performs maintenance, repair and overhaul services to turboprop and turbofan engines and engine components for the aviation and aerospace industries. Established in 1992, the company has expanded from its initial focus on the Pratt & Whitney PW100 series turboprop engines to acquiring its first repair and overhaul licence for a jet engine, with the Pratt & Whitney JT15D, a 3,000-pound thrust engine.

In 2002, the company received AIF support to undertake the research and development initiative known as Centre of Repair Excellence, which is designed to position the business as an international leader in gas turbine engine maintenance and repair. Atlantic Turbines has continued to develop its export business and participated in the ACOA-sponsored trade and technology mission to the United Kingdom in 2004 and the Paris Air Show in 2005 and 2007.

With assistance from ACOA's AIF, the company has successfully met growing customer demand. It now employs more than 300 people and derives 80% of its revenues from exports.



Brian Thompson, president of Atlantic Turbines International Inc.

4.4 Foreign Investment in Atlantic Canada

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is a competitive area that offers important economic benefits for Atlantic Canada. FDI plays a significant role in strengthening economic development, the development of business clusters and the industrial critical mass required to compete in the global economy. Between 2004 and 2006, foreign investment firms accounted for 33.6% of all investment in capital and equipment in Atlantic Canada, representing an investment of \$27 billion.

ACOA's investment strategy is designed to increase international awareness of the region as a profitable business location for investment and to provide opportunities for foreign investment in Atlantic Canada. The strategy focuses on four areas.

1. **Investment research** – identification and analysis of key factors influencing investment location decisions by foreign corporations, and the analysis of major trends and developments in the international investment community. The Agency also participates in national studies on foreign investment.
2. **Market intelligence and information dissemination** – tracking trends and developments in foreign investment, and making this information available through investment bulletins and training sessions.
3. **Awareness and promotion** – tools such as marketing campaigns and outreach events.
4. **Investment partnerships** – coordination of federal/provincial initiatives.

Activities designed to respond to the investment strategy include the following.

- Supporting research to address the limited data available on foreign investment and its impact on Atlantic Canada. An example is the research completed by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC), *Attracting the Big Bucks: Foreign Investment in Atlantic Canada (2005)*.
- Raising the profile of Atlantic Canada in the U.S. and European investment communities by investing nearly \$2 million in the last five years in awareness and promotion activities. Furthermore, the establishment of the Pan-Atlantic Investment Coordination Committee created a vehicle for pooling resources with federal and provincial partners to create critical mass in investment marketing and development activities.

Between 2003 and 2006, Canada experienced an increase of 10% in FDI projects, with the service sector overtaking manufacturing. In addition to the United States, which continues to be a major source of FDI in Canada, Europe and Asia have become important sources of investment. Atlantic Canada has begun to see gains in strategic areas such as business process outsourcing, IT and financial services.

Atlantic Canada remains the most cost-competitive region for investment based on KPMG's in-depth international study. The Agency has worked to ensure that Atlantic Canada is included in the report.

4.5 Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development

To help foster business growth within Atlantic Canada, ACOA invests in activities that help to create an entrepreneurial climate where self-employment is considered a viable career option and business skills development is part of the business culture. This strategy helps to ensure that there are more entrepreneurs and, equally importantly, that owners of SMEs are better positioned to have their businesses survive and grow.

\$44.2 million was invested in entrepreneurship and business skills development projects through the Business Development Program (April 2002 to October 2007).

"I sought out the services of Entrepreneurs' Forum because I was dealing with several challenges within my small business," said Steve Howatt, President and founder of Atlantic AgriTech Inc., a successful agriculture research company based in New Glasgow, Prince Edward Island. "I feel my session was one of the most beneficial and rewarding activities I have taken part in relating to the management and running of my business. I received a tremendous amount of information and advice, and fully intend to implement many of the suggestions into my business over the coming weeks and months."

Since the Agency's creation, ACOA aims to increase the number of Atlantic Canadian entrepreneurs. To achieve this, investments are made primarily through contributions to non-commercial organizations, such as business associations, economic development associations and educational institutions, which in turn, undertake activities that foster entrepreneurship and business skills development. The primary initiatives supporting these investments are the Young Entrepreneur Development Initiative (YEDI) and the Women in Business Initiative (WBI).

The Entrepreneurs' Forum helps entrepreneurs to enhance their management skills. ACOA, along with the National Research Council of Canada and the provinces of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island, provides financial support to this initiative, which helps knowledge-based companies access business advice from a large network of volunteer business professionals.

Since 2003, over 900 volunteer advisers have spent more than 6,200 hours assisting over 650 individuals involved in starting and growing companies. Further, the latest client survey reported that 92% of clients feel that they could not have received this quality of advice elsewhere, and 88% of clients found the advisory sessions useful or very useful.

Increasing the Competitiveness of Women Business Owners



Maria Matthews, founder and president of Vision, The Atlantic Canada Co.

The Agency invests in customized programming to increase the competitiveness of women business owners in Atlantic Canada. ACOA's Women in Business Initiative (WBI), established in 2002, provides funding to business support organizations that help women to grow their businesses. Financing, training and encouragement to explore international markets, and developing innovative ways to do business are some of the services provided through this initiative.

Since 2002, ACOA has contributed more than \$16 million to not-for-profit organizations in support of women entrepreneurs.

An evaluation of the WBI in 2004 found strong support among women entrepreneurs for the projects and services funded by the initiative. In fact, 89% of the respondents placed high value on the business counselling services offered. Overall satisfaction with the WBI was 84%. Among the positive program features identified by WBI clients are: the professionalism of staff, accuracy of information, scope of geographic coverage and access to detailed needs assessment.

ACOA's work to support women in business is captured in a range of activities the Agency has pursued in the last five years:

"These women business owners participating in a women exporters initiative organized by the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters [CME] represent the best of Atlantic Canada's emerging new entrepreneurs," said Ann Janega, Vice-President of the CME Nova Scotia Division. "Their companies have tremendous growth potential and the CME is committed to helping them take their place among Canada's leading manufacturers and exporters."

- Assistance to five Atlantic Canadian business support organizations to provide women entrepreneurs throughout Atlantic Canada with business planning, counselling and mentoring support. In 2006-2007 alone, these organizations conducted approximately 4,200 business counselling sessions with more than 1,800 women.
- Various business skills development activities targeting women entrepreneurs, such as workshops, conferences and networking events. Collectively, participation levels exceeded 3,700 in 2006-2007.
- Since 2003, more than 550 women entrepreneurs have accessed financing they would normally not have qualified for due to lack of equity and/or collateral.

New Brunswick Association of CBDCs – Women in Business Initiative

With financial assistance from ACOA's WBI, five development officers located throughout the province work with women business owners to help them access expert business advice, information, mentorship and support; acquire information on financing; identify ways to enhance their innovation and export capacity; and participate in training, professional development and networking opportunities.

The success of this ACOA-supported network is demonstrated by the local women business owners who have been recognized as exceptional entrepreneurs. In 2005, Andrea Fuenekes, President of Remsoft in Fredericton, New Brunswick, was named RBC Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year for Innovation. Lily Durepos and her partner at Alliance-Assurance, in Grand Falls, New Brunswick, were named Atlantic Entrepreneur of the Year in the Services category at an Ernst and Young awards ceremony in 2006.

Encouraging Young Atlantic Canadian Entrepreneurs

To enable more young Atlantic Canadians to start and grow businesses, ACOA focuses on activities that provide them with hands-on learning, such as entrepreneurship courses and workshops, business planning competitions, summer business venture programs, and youth business camps.

From October 2002 to June 2007, ACOA invested approximately \$15 million in more than 200 projects to support YEDI's goals and objectives.

ACOA's Young Entrepreneur Development Initiative (YEDI) is designed to expand and enhance the entrepreneurship training, information and support services available to Atlantic Canadians under the age of 35. ACOA provides financial support to not-for-profit and non-commercial organizations to develop projects and programs that help young people to start and build these businesses.

Survey results obtained in a 2004 evaluation were positive. Many youths started businesses after attending a YEDI-funded activity. Respondents reported:

- high satisfaction with the project's activities;
- improved financial management of their businesses;
- increased ability to sustain their businesses; and
- increased growth in their businesses.

The following examples illustrate ACOA's contribution to the development of youth entrepreneurs.

Young Millionaires Program Prince Edward Island

The Young Millionaires Program, which has a successful track record dating back to 1992, provides an opportunity for Prince Edward Island's youth between the ages of eight and 16 to start their own businesses by supplying them with seed funding. The program aims to spark the entrepreneurial spirit of PEI's youth, and give them a first-hand experience of business opportunities that could exist within their own communities. Aspiring entrepreneurs attend various workshops to learn about the fundamentals of owning and operating a business.

"This program gives our youth a chance to see first-hand the business opportunities that exist here on the Island," said Norman Gallant, Chairman of the Central Development Corporation. "What an exciting way for them to learn about what their futures can hold."

The program receives financing from ACOA, the provincial government, and the Central Development Corporation (CDC). The CDC administers the Young Millionaires Program in conjunction with Active Communities Inc., Resources West Inc., La Société de développement de la Baie Acadienne, and the PEI Business Development Corporation. More than 500 creative youth businesses have been set up since 2003.

Students in Business

Nova Scotia

The Students in Business (SIB) initiative was started in 2004 with financial support from ACOA, Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC) and the Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development. SIB's objective is to develop entrepreneurial skills and interest among younger people throughout Nova Scotia. The program offers a maximum of \$5,000 in loan assistance for each business set up by students between the ages of 15 and 35 who are currently attending or planning to return to a recognized educational institution.

Since 2004, the program has provided 256 loans to students, resulting in the creation of 342 full-time equivalent jobs province-wide. Of the \$1.03 million in loans invested in businesses established under this initiative to date, approximately \$42,000 or 4.1% has been written off, which is a very low failure rate given the level of risk.

The SIB initiative is delivered by the Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) and the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development (CEED), with financial support from ACOA, ECBC and Service Canada.

ACE Memorial

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

Advancing Canadian Entrepreneurship (ACE) Inc., a national organization for entrepreneurship training and education, supports Canadian entrepreneurship by organizing and motivating teams of university and college students to practice and teach the principles and values of entrepreneurship.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, ACE Memorial was established in 1992 and involves more than 70 students from Memorial University of Newfoundland's Faculty of Business Administration. ACE Memorial has become one of the strongest ACE teams in the country, earning an impressive second-place finish in 2007 at the Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) World Cup in New York City. This competition included 43 countries with more than 1,500 teams worldwide.

ACOA's 2007 investment in ACE Memorial is helping to finance various activities including Launch Pad, a business incubation centre to help students build successful businesses and community events. More recently, ACE Memorial received additional financial support to provide training sessions in the areas of accounting, marketing and human resources to a local community development organization in Port Hope Simpson, Labrador.

ACOA's strategy for increasing business skills development has met with excellent results in the tourism sector.

Tourism Best Practices Missions

Since 2000, ACOA, in co-operation with the Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick, has led 68 Best Practices missions involving more than 557 industry representatives. The missions focused on educational seminars and tours of successful operations outside of Atlantic Canada that offer high-quality tourism experiences. The missions are designed to provide Atlantic Canada's tourism businesses, along with government officials at the federal, provincial and municipal levels, with an opportunity to learn from leading-edge operators offering products, destinations and experiences similar to their own. Participants have reported that the missions have helped them by providing valuable opportunities to share ideas, strategies and concerns with other groups and people at various stages of tourism development.

"We've worked very hard on our community outreach projects and are very proud of what we've achieved," said ACE Memorial President Heather Comerford. "The Students in Free Enterprise World Cup allowed ACE Memorial to showcase our work on an international stage and we're absolutely thrilled with our performance. This is the highest any Canadian team has ever placed in this competition."

4.6 Financing Continuum

In Atlantic Canada, enterprises do not have access to the diversity of financing options that exist in larger centres. SMEs often experience difficulties in obtaining financing due to a variety of factors including under-capitalization, assessment of risk by lenders, as well as financing gaps that are often associated with business financing in rural areas.

In association with public and private sector partners, ACOA works with the financial community to overcome these impediments to business growth and to help fill the financing gaps. The Agency helps to ensure the availability of a continuum of financing so that companies can access the financing they require at all stages of their life cycle. ACOA works to

complement the role of angel investors, venture capital firms and public offerings in equity financing; it intervenes by fostering the development of adequate debt financing from commercial banks, credit unions and other lending institutions.

Business Development Program – 2003-2008 Activity

Project Type	Number of Projects	Approved ACOA Funding (\$ millions)	Total Project Costs (\$ millions)
Start-ups	238	65.8	392.4
Expansions/Modernizations	915	147.3	439.3
Total	1,153	213.1	831.7

ACOA continues to complement private funding through the Business Development Program (BDP), which provides direct assistance to SMEs for a variety of purposes – start-ups, expansions, marketing, training, productivity and quality improvement – where funding cannot be obtained through conventional financing.

In 2004, ACOA approved a \$10-million contribution toward the establishment of the GrowthWorks Atlantic Venture Fund to re-energize the venture market in Atlantic Canada. The fund is a labour-sponsored venture capital corporation that raises money through offering shares to local investors, who benefit from tax savings offered under federal and provincial tax regimes. The fund invests this capital in promising business ventures based in Atlantic Canada, thereby maximizing their innovation and growth capabilities.

ACOA has also partnered with the First Angel Network Association, a not-for-profit organization created in 2005 to help bridge the gap in Atlantic Canada between entrepreneur and capital through communication, education and networking. The network represents a new source of equity capital for qualified entrepreneurs whereby wealthy individuals can invest in interesting local business opportunities. By funding strategic projects such as a GrowthWorks Atlantic, angel networks and microcredit initiatives, ACOA is fostering the development of the financial markets in Atlantic Canada.

The most recent evaluation of the BDP found that for every dollar invested, the GDP impact is \$7.50. Net benefits to the taxpayers also showed positive results. For every dollar invested, the net returns to the taxpayer are more than two dollars.

These investments have led to numerous successful business expansions and modernization, such as BWS Manufacturing Ltd. (BWS).

BWS Manufacturing Ltd. Centreville, New Brunswick

BWS manufactures a wide variety of trailer and truck bodies for use in the forestry, mining and construction industries. In 2003, ACOA supported the company to conduct a diagnostic review of its operations, which at that time were producing significant losses. This situation was creating difficulties for the business in terms of the financing required to make necessary improvements.

Since 2003, the Agency has invested over \$200,000 in BWS, enabling the company to finance expansion and modernization, and to undertake lean manufacturing and training initiatives.

As a result of these investment initiatives, BWS has seen an 85% increase in revenues since 2003, leading to a profitable position in 2007. ACOA's role in business financing for BWS has enabled the company to continue as an important rural business with over 80 employees.

4.7 Access to Business Information

Atlantic Canadians interested in starting or growing a business need convenient access to information on government regulations, programs and resources. Typical questions relate to business start up, business planning, securing financing, market research, human resource management, international trade, and protecting intellectual property. ACOA is a partner in Canada Business, a government information service providing a single point of entry for businesses and start-up entrepreneurs in Canada. In Atlantic Canada, service centres are managed by ACOA and are located in each provincial capital. They are complemented by satellite network sites located in rural communities.

The service centres offer free services including access to market research databases, sample business plans and guides to information sources. The services provided by Canada Business have been instrumental in helping SMEs such as Wellness Forever Natural Products and Grondin Ventilation.

Wellness Forever Natural Products Halifax, Nova Scotia

Jack Pelley is a great example of an entrepreneur helped by Canada Business. Mr. Pelley had an idea for a business. He had discovered the health benefits of hemp seed oil, especially for treating Type-2 diabetes. After having the hemp seed oil tested at a federal research station, he had it encapsulated and administered to a control group. When this research and development achieved consistently positive results, Mr. Pelley decided to explore his entrepreneurial options. This led him to his local Canada Business Centre to collect information on how to start a business. The Centre's staff pointed him toward relevant resources in the on-site library and helped him to acquire the information and contacts he needed to get his business underway.

Mr. Pelley now owns and operates Wellness Forever Natural Products, the company that distributes Rx.Healthyme. Besides its benefits for Type-2 diabetics, the product offers other health benefits, such as improving blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and increasing metabolism. Since 2003, the company's sales have tripled.

Grondin Ventilation Inc. Saint-Jacques, New Brunswick

Grondin Ventilation Inc. designs, manufactures and installs customized ventilation solutions. When standard equipment no longer met the company's requirements, the owners decided to design and build their own equipment. The company was able to obtain market research assistance from Canada Business to prepare its product for commercialization. The result is a Computerized Numerical Control plasma cutting table, which is fully competitive in the marketplace.

We're also using the market research as part of our business case to attract investors. It's been a big help to us along the way.

Jeammy and Bruno Grondin
Grondin Ventilation Inc.

Canada Business: Exemplary Client Service

Canada Business was recognized in 2004 with the United Nations Public Service Award in the category of "Improvement of Public Service Results." Its success is further acknowledged by a national client survey completed in 2006-2007. Survey results showed that 85% of those using the services were satisfied with the quality of the information received, and 87% of respondents reported that the staff at the centres "went the extra mile." Significantly, 55% of respondents indicated that the service helped them in the process of starting a business.

2004 United Nations Public Service Award presented to Canada Business.

Chapter 5

Community Development

5.1 Overview

Strong communities are the foundation of Atlantic Canada's social and economic fabric.

The Agency supports Atlantic Canadian communities in their efforts to develop the resources they need to take full responsibility for their own economic development. This approach to community development is based on the principle that the problems facing communities, such as unemployment and economic instability, can best be addressed through a bottom-up process.

To this end, ACOA has developed effective partnerships with local communities and a network of locally based organizations to ensure their participation in planning and decision-making. ACOA's collaborative approach not only engages local communities, but also enlists the co-operation of all levels of government. Drawing on local strengths, creativity and resources, all stakeholders address the economic opportunities and challenges facing these communities together.

Community development has emerged as an important means of fostering economic diversification in Atlantic Canada. The Agency invests in initiatives that provide the best value for investment while addressing community priorities.

5.2 Community Development Resources

Local economic development strategies identify specific sectors as foundations for sustainable growth. Accordingly, the Agency works with community partners to develop local plans for key sectors, to promote capacity building in support of these sectors, and to invest in strategic projects within the sectors.

To support community development effectively, ACOA has created a network of local and district offices, providing 36 points of contact with community development partners across Atlantic Canada. To fill the gaps in the community development model, ACOA also supports other key community economic development organizations such as the Regional Economic Development Organizations (REDOs), which are located throughout the region and directed by the communities themselves.

Atlantic Canada's 52 REDOs are mandated to promote local economic development through community development and strategic planning.

ACOA, in partnership with the provinces and local government, provides the underpinning of operational resources to REDOs across Atlantic Canada. The primary objective of REDOs is to mobilize economic development at the local level and to foster citizen input to the creation of a local development strategy. The strategy can be as varied as skills and learning initiatives, regional promotion, investment and tourism development. There are 52 REDOs involved in economic development planning and coordination in Atlantic Canadian communities. Each is governed by a volunteer board of directors and managed by professional staff.

5.3 Community-Based Business Development

ACOA's role in community-based business development is undertaken in collaboration with 41 Canada Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) located throughout Atlantic Canada. The CBDCs represent a vibrant network of local business and are accountable to ACOA through funding agreements.

The Community Futures Program is one such funding arrangement. The program provides operational and capital funding to 41 CBDCs, located in rural communities and run by volunteer boards of directors. This model is based on the principle that local decision-making by community members empowers communities to take charge of their own economic development. The CBDCs support rural Atlantic Canada in the creation, expansion and modernization of SMEs by providing financial assistance in the form of loans, loan guarantees and equity financing to entrepreneurs or those persons wishing to start an enterprise. ACOA administers over \$12 million annually to finance the operating costs of the CBDCs through the national Community Futures Program.

Seed Capital Program lending over five years — \$34.4 million invested in nearly 3,000 loans.

The CBDCs have invested \$257 million in 9,000 loans, with an additional \$262 million leveraged over the last five years. These contributions permit the CBDCs to provide an essential source of investment capital that focuses on rural small business development, as well as business counselling and skills development. ACOA also works with the CBDCs to assist Atlantic Canadians through the Seed Capital Program. Under the program, young entrepreneurs may seek an unsecured personal loan with flexible interest and repayment terms to start or expand their businesses, and they may receive business training and counselling. An evaluation of the Seed Capital Program in March 2004 confirmed the need for the program, noting that it combines key elements of financial, training and mentoring support needed by young entrepreneurs.

CBDCs: Autonomous, volunteer-led organizations providing investment capital, micro-credit loans, business counselling and business skills development in rural areas, focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises.

ACOA has created new ways to provide an ongoing source of investment capital for local business owners. In May 2000, the Atlantic Canada Community Business Investment Fund (ACCBIF) was created as a regional credit facility. The CBDCs borrow from the ACCBIF and re-lend to small business clients. To date, ACOA has contributed \$15.6 million to the fund. As a result of this contribution, combined with capital investments from the CBDCs, the value of the fund now exceeds \$25 million.

In March 2004, a fund was created to support the development and use of technology for small business in rural Atlantic Canada. The Technology Development Fund, a community-based, \$7-million revolving fund, provides unsecured loans to small and medium-sized businesses for a period of up to five years.

ACOA's strategic alliance with the CBDCs has helped to establish an effective community-based infrastructure while making government services more accessible. The following two examples demonstrate how this partnership helps Atlantic Canadian entrepreneurs and communities.

Fibre-Isle International Mont Carmel, Prince Edward Island

The need for more Island-made products provided two Island entrepreneurs with the inspiration to start their own business. In May 2007, after many years of planning and research, Sylvie Toupin and Jacques Arsenault opened Prince Edward Island's first yarn-manufacturing facility. They

specialize in taking high-quality yarn made from bison hair and turning it into customized products, such as scarves, shawls, mittens and socks.

The partners approached CBDC Central PEI for financial support in December 2006 and received investment support from the Small Business Loan and Seed Capital programs. The funding helped Fibre-Isle International purchase high-tech equipment used to convert the bison hair to yarn.

CBDC Central PEI has also supported a training program to help the company develop accounting and bookkeeping skills. As a result of local enterprise and initiative, a unique business has been launched, adding to the economic diversification and stability of Mont Carmel.

Genoa Design

Conception Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador

Genoa Design exemplifies how ACOA's alliance with Atlantic Canadian CBDCs has benefited local business development. The company was developed by Leonard Pecore, a naval architect who, in 1995, began working as a consultant from his home in Conception Bay South.

Within a few years, Genoa Design was landing long-distance contracts and began taking a more international direction. Darren Letto, a former classmate and old boot camp buddy of Leonard's joined the team, providing needed investment and front-line shipyard experience. The new partners, with funding support from federal and provincial agencies, including CBDC Cabot, aggressively made their way into the U.S. market.

Genoa Design International Ltd. steadily gained a foothold with shipbuilding firms across the U.S. and Canada as a supplier of quality production design and drafting detail, as well as 3D modelling. Recently, Genoa expanded into the European market.

Several employees are expatriate Newfoundlanders who came home from Canada's western oil patch to work for Genoa.

5.4 Community Investment

ACOA partners with communities in strategic investments that focus on infrastructure, capacity building at the community level, and business sector development. Strategic investments reflect economic development

plans and priorities that are developed and implemented by communities. It is one more step in ACOA's Community Development model. Once a strategy is developed, the Agency, along with its partners, invests in the opportunities identified by the community. Often that first step in the implementation of a development plan for a community or sector leads to a larger capacity for the community to pursue its objectives.

Since 2003, the Strategic Community Investment Fund has invested \$161 million in 539 projects, leveraging more than \$137 million in other funding by ACOA's partners.

In the period 2003-2008, the Agency operated two programs to support community investment – the Strategic Community Investment Fund and, since 2005, the Innovative Communities Fund. These funds have provided non-repayable investments to non-commercial/not-for-profit organizations such as local development associations, municipalities and their agencies, business and technology institutes, industry sector associations, economic development associations, local co-operatives, universities and other educational institutions.

ACOA's Strategic Community Investment Fund (SCIF) operated as a five-year program under the Government of Canada's Atlantic Investment Partnership, which was announced in June 2000. A summative evaluation of the program, conducted in March 2008, concluded that SCIF was an effective program that contributed to the economic development of the Atlantic region. Furthermore, the evaluation indicated that the program received positive reviews from the communities it served. More specifically, the evaluation found that the program:

- was relevant to the needs of communities across Atlantic Canada;
- was linked to government-wide priorities;
- was relevant to ACOA's mandate;
- addressed the needs of communities and enhanced their capacity for economic development initiatives;
- produced the intended projects results in terms of infrastructure;
- benefited businesses and residents in those communities from an economic and social perspective; and
- was complementary to other ACOA programs and to other federal and provincial programs.

The Innovative Communities Fund, a five-year, \$175-million program introduced in July 2005 as part of Phase II of the Atlantic Investment Partnership, focuses primarily on rural areas, helping to strengthen and

diversify their economies. The ICF capitalizes on the opportunities and strengths that exist in these communities to develop competitive industry sectors, to strengthen community infrastructure, and to enhance the capacity of communities to overcome economic development challenges.

Since 2005, the Innovative Communities Fund has invested \$155 million in 379 projects, leveraging \$222 million in funding from other sources.

An example of community investment in Atlantic Canada is the deployment of broadband infrastructure. Broadband access to the Internet is vital for communities to achieve competitiveness and growth in the global economy. To this end, the Agency has been involved in numerous projects, investing over \$47 million in all four provinces to assist communities lacking broadband access.

The following profiles illustrate the importance of ACOA investment to the economic growth and social sustainability of Atlantic Canada's rural communities.

Truro Investment Cooperative Limited – Marigold Cultural Centre Truro, Nova Scotia

The Marigold Cultural Centre is an example of an initiative identified and led by the community, which was supported by ACOA and other partners supported. In 2003, the Colchester Regional Development Agency (CoRDA) commissioned a sector strategy. This strategy recommended the cultural sector as one of four sectors to grow the economic base of the Colchester/Cumberland County region. CoRDA and business leaders in Truro recognized that a vibrant cultural community could be an economic engine while helping to attract and retain skilled workers and their families looking for a high quality of life.

A renovated downtown property, the Marigold Cultural Centre is a 10,000-square-foot, multi-use building housing visual and performing arts facilities, a centre for arts education, an art gallery, the Truro Sports Hall of Fame, and commercial offices. A community-led partnership involving the downtown business community, the Town of Truro, the Cobequid Arts Council, CoRDA, the Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development and ACOA was formed to raise funds for the renovations. The community raised almost \$1 million of the total \$1.48 million investment. ACOA contributed \$210,000.

The activity generated by the Marigold Cultural Centre will have spin-offs for existing businesses such as restaurants and entertainment venues, and will help to attract businesses that want to share in the success of this venture. It will support the heritage and artistic integrity of the multi-cultural community through performances, exhibits and the sale of art to visitors and residents. The project has created a lasting impression on the residents of Truro, showing that they can make things happen in their community. By coming together with local business and municipal government, the community has created a centre for social gatherings, community expression and entertainment, which may be the catalyst for the emergence of what renowned economist Richard Florida calls the “creative class” in the Truro community.

Celtic Colours International Festival Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

Since 1997, the Celtic Colours International Festival has been a key promoter of Cape Breton culture, its music industry and its autumn beauty. The annual festival features hundreds of musicians from Cape Breton and around the globe, attracts 7,000 visitors from more than 20 countries, and runs on the energy of nearly 1,500 Island community volunteers. The Celtic Colours International Festival has firmly established an annual fall shoulder season and, with support from ACOA, resulted in annual economic spin-offs of more than \$5.1 million.

Beginning in 2005, ACOA entered a five-year funding partnership with the Celtic Colours International Festival, contributing \$800,000 to the festival under the Innovative Communities Fund to support infrastructure and product development. Recognized as a world-class event, the festival is often seen as a pillar of the Atlantic Canada tourism calendar, showing long-term viability and achieving growing success over the last 11 years.

Acknowledgements through a number of awards prove that the Celtic Colours International Festival is a premier tourist attraction. These include: the Tourism Industry Association of Canada’s Event of the Year award in 2007; the East Coast Music Association’s Event of the Year in 2005, 2006 and 2007; Attractions Canada Top Cultural Event in 2001; and the American Bus Association Top Event in 2001. This festival stimulates economic activity and honours Cape Breton’s culture, music and beauty.

Marine Institute – Safety, Emergency Response Training Centre (SERT)

Stephenville, Newfoundland and Labrador

Stephenville's airport includes a unique training field that is now being used by the Marine Institute to deliver certified safety and emergency response training for the oil and gas, fish harvesting, marine transportation and aviation sectors. ACOA has contributed \$1.36 million to this \$3.05-million project, which is estimated to have an annual economic impact in excess of \$1 million.

The SERT serves an immediate market of 3,400 students and has a projected three-year enrolment of just over 10,000. ACOA's partnership with the Marine Institute in developing the infrastructure of the Centre has strengthened the diversification of the economic base of the Stephenville community, building on existing assets and expertise.

5.5 Official Language Minority Communities

Atlantic Canada accounts for one-third of Canada's Francophone population living in official language minority communities. Approximately 275,000 of the individuals who self-identify as Francophone live in rural areas. The challenges facing these communities include a higher than average unemployment rate, an aging population, declining demographics, and a lack of sustainable economic development opportunities.

By partnering with representative community groups and federal, provincial and municipal departments, ACOA collaborates on economic opportunities that address the needs of these communities. Furthermore, enhancing the vitality of official language minority communities is a requirement of Canada's *Official Languages Act*, and ACOA plays an active role in its implementation.

\$10 million is invested annually in the economic development of OLMCs in Atlantic Canada.

An example of such collaboration is the Atlantic Canada Cultural and Economic Partnership (ACCEP). Created in 2002, the ACCEP was a three-year, pan-Atlantic initiative funded jointly by Canadian Heritage and ACOA to stimulate economic development through cultural initiatives and to celebrate the history and cultural diversity of Atlantic Canada. Through this \$10-million program, 76 projects were funded, including support for the organization of the third Acadian World

Congress held in Nova Scotia in 2004. An evaluation of the ACCEP concluded that the partnership was a success and that it succeeded in highlighting the contribution of culture to economic growth in Atlantic Canada.

The PERCÉ Project, a \$310,000 initiative in Prince Edward Island, is another successful partnership aimed at encouraging Acadian and Francophone youth studying outside the province to return home and explore career opportunities. This initiative is a partnership between ACOA, La Société de développement de la Baie Acadienne and the Evangeline region in West Prince County. Through a mentorship arrangement, participants develop new skills and knowledge and a network of contacts in their field of interest. ACOA provided funding of \$224,820 toward the overall cost of the project.

ACOA has a long-standing commitment to supporting tourism projects that contribute to the region's economic growth. ACOA investment continues, with support for infrastructure improvement and cultural promotion designed to showcase the unique cultures of Atlantic Canada's Acadian and Aboriginal populations.

Le Pays de la Sagouine **Bouctouche, New Brunswick**

The Agency's support for *Le Pays de la Sagouine* began over 10 years ago and investments have now surpassed \$2.5 million.

The town of Bouctouche, New Brunswick, which has a population of 2,500 residents greets some 65,000 tourists during the summer thanks to *Le Pays de la Sagouine*, a reproduction of an Acadian village inspired by the town's renowned novelist, Antonine Maillet, and her most celebrated character, *La Sagouine*. Throughout an extended tourist season, the town comes alive with theatre, music, comedy and dance – immersing visitors in Acadian culture. The town of Bouctouche is a small community doing big things. The success of *Le Pays de la Sagouine* illustrates the value and importance of enhancing the vitality of official language minority communities.

This investment is essential to the continued growth of *Le Pays de la Sagouine*. With the proposed renovations, we were able to expand our season and calendar of activities, and accommodate further future growth.

Paul LeBlanc
Executive Director,
Le Pays de la Sagouine

ACOA's investments in *Le Pays de la Sagouine* have helped to develop critical economic development infrastructure in rural New Brunswick – capitalizing on the capacity, strengths and opportunities in the town of Bouctouche. ACOA's long-standing support for this initiative is a testament to the Agency's commitment to ensuring the sustained growth of official language minority communities throughout Canada.

5.6 Aboriginal Economic Development

Aboriginal peoples in Atlantic Canada represent the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Innu, Inuit and Métis nations and account for approximately six percent of the Aboriginal population in Canada.

The responsibility for assisting Aboriginal communities in addressing the complex social and economic challenges they face is shared among federal government departments. While ACOA does not have specific programming for Aboriginal communities, it does partner with many Aboriginal organizations and federal and provincial departments to assist in building the economic capacity of these communities.

For example, in September 2007, ACOA joined with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia to announce a four-year research program aimed at fostering Aboriginal economic development in Atlantic Canada. The research project, led by the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs Secretariat Inc. in partnership with a consortium of 11 Atlantic Canadian universities, supports workshops aimed at improving strategic decision making; research linked to the needs of Aboriginal communities; and the development of a repository of information and analysis pertaining to Aboriginal economic development.

The Aboriginal Business Development Fund Project

New economic and employment opportunities are being realized for Aboriginal entrepreneurs through a funding partnership between ACOA and the Ulnooeweg Development Group (UDG). The UDG, an Aboriginal Capital Corporation that offers business advice and delivers loans to Aboriginal entrepreneurs, administers the Aboriginal Business Development Fund (ABDF), which was established in 2004 to create a partnership with ACOA. This \$6-million fund provides low-interest financing for the establishment, modernization and expansion of

businesses. The ABDF has significantly improved access to capital for Aboriginal entrepreneurs. Its success is evident in the consistent number of loans issued in the last three years.

5.7 Infrastructure Programming

The provision and maintenance of quality public infrastructure is a prerequisite for sustainable development and economic prosperity. Potable water and waste treatment facilities, highways, municipal roads, bridges and transit systems all impact the potential for economic growth and have important environmental implications. This requires programming designed to renew and build infrastructure through investments that protect the environment and support long-term economic growth.

We are very pleased to work with ACOA on this important initiative. While Aboriginal businesses are operating in all sectors of the economy, there is considerable potential for growth. The Aboriginal Business Development Fund will go a long way in helping us to achieve our goals.

Chief Terry Paul
Chairman, Board of Directors,
Ulnooweg Development
Group Inc.

ACOA works collaboratively with Infrastructure Canada and the four Atlantic Provinces to deliver federal infrastructure programs such as the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund and the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund (CSIF). Established in 2003, the CSIF is scheduled to be in effect until 2013.

CSIF funding supports major infrastructure initiatives of strategic importance to the region. For example, the Harbour Solutions Project in Halifax, Nova Scotia, represents a major investment in this area. It is

the largest infrastructure project in Halifax's history and involves essentially re-plumbing the city with hundreds of kilometres of underground pipes. Three new sewage treatment plants, a bio-solids process facility and several new pumping stations are either being rebuilt or

constructed. As a result, approximately 150 million litres of untreated wastewater that previously flowed daily into Halifax Harbour will now be diverted for treatment.

Harbour Solutions –
\$60 million toward the
\$333 million total project costs.

ACOA's investment in infrastructure includes projects that build high-capacity Internet access. The New Brunswick Broadband project resulted in 90% of residences and 95% of businesses having high-capacity access to the Internet. In addition, 100% of regional health care centres, business parks and First Nations' communities gained access.

The New Brunswick Broadband Project

Government of Canada	\$16.5 million
Province of New Brunswick	\$12.5 million
Private sector	\$15.6 million
Total	\$44.6 million

ACOA's infrastructure partnership activities include the delivery of the \$8.8-billion Building Canada Fund (BCF), which forms part of the \$33-billion federal funding for the Building Canada Plan announced in the federal budget of March 2007. This seven-year plan, 2007-2014, uses a competitive, merit-based application process to support projects in small communities. The program is governed through a contribution agreement with the provinces and is managed in Atlantic Canada by ACOA, on behalf of Infrastructure Canada. Eligible investments under the BCF include: public transit, transportation, wastewater treatment, green energy, solid waste management, clean drinking water, broadband and connectivity, cultural, sport and tourism.

5.8 Special Adjustment Measures

Changes in the economic circumstances of industries or firms may have a major negative impact on local communities, particularly in the case of single-industry communities in rural areas.

As a region still highly dependent on the resource sectors, Atlantic Canada faces significant challenges in terms of economic adjustment. On behalf of the Government of Canada, ACOA has been called upon to mobilize its programs and resources in support of special adjustment measures and to partner with other stakeholders in mounting an effective and timely response at the local level. Examples of such economic challenges include the closure of military bases and the decline of the North Atlantic cod fishery.

Adjustment measures are designed to mitigate short-term impacts on communities and workers, and to facilitate economic adjustment through diversification of the economic base. Short-term adjustment assistance has led to the creation of new business opportunities and economic diversification for communities affected by industry closure, as evidenced by the Saint John Shipyard Adjustment Initiative (SJSIAI). The SJSIAI is a \$55-million program that was designed for redevelopment opportunities to offset the closure of the Saint John Shipyard, to help create new

industrial opportunities in New Brunswick. Under this initiative, ACOA, on behalf of the Government of Canada, provided funding for feasibility studies, site preparation, and a \$35-million contribution toward construction of a gypsum wallboard manufacturing facility located on the former shipyard site. Irving Shipbuilding Inc. has committed to matching the Government of Canada's investment with \$55 million of its own funds, representing a potential total investment of \$110 million in new industrial opportunities for New Brunswickers.

In April 2003, ACOA's Strategic Community Investment Fund (SCIF) was revised to add the Short Term Adjustment Initiative (STAI), aimed at mitigating the short-term impacts of the cod stock closures in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of St. Lawrence. Through the STAI initiative, 192 projects were approved with a total contribution of \$31.6 million.

Chapter 6

Policy, Advocacy and Coordination

6.1 Overview

ACOA plays an important role in alerting and informing the federal government of the economic challenges and opportunities facing Atlantic Canada. The Agency's policy work provides a foundation for the development of strategic priorities and initiatives, program design, and input to national policy development and federal-provincial relations. In addition to conducting research internally, the Agency also engages public and private sector partners and research bodies for in-depth research and analysis of key issues affecting the region.

Advocacy activities aim to advance the region's interests in national policies and programs and to maximize regional industrial benefits from public sector procurement.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, ACOA plays an important coordination role in the development and implementation of national policies and program initiatives as they relate to Atlantic Canada. The Agency does so by engaging other federal departments, provincial governments, the business sector, and universities and colleges to build a coordinated approach to strategic priorities.

The Atlantic Gateway provides an example of how ACOA uses its policy, advocacy and coordination activities to benefit the Atlantic region and Canada.

The Atlantic Gateway

The role of gateways and corridors as key infrastructure links in Canada's national and international supply chains has been recognized by the Government of Canada as offering important economic development opportunities. In Budget 2007, the federal government announced a

\$2.1-billion National Gateway and Border Crossing Fund, and the development of a National Policy Framework for Strategic Gateways and Trade Corridors. The 2007 Speech from the Throne highlighted the Atlantic Gateway as an east coast point of international entry to North American markets.

Quickly changing and growing global trade and transportation patterns are being driven primarily by increasingly efficient and complex global supply chains. Components manufactured in different parts of the world must be carried as rapidly as possible to points of final assembly of a product. In this integrated system, the efficient transfer of goods between transportation modes, especially from land to sea and sea to land, is critical. The onward movement of final assembled products to market is equally important. The movement of goods between the emerging Asian economies and North America is a particularly important part of the growth in global trade.

This network of transportation modes – sea, rail, road and air – continues to be extensively studied in research commissioned by ACOA and its partners. The research is intended to identify opportunities and challenges in the development of the Atlantic Gateway, to provide a base for partners to develop suitable policies and programs. The Atlantic Gateway Business Case Study, made public in October 2007, concluded that there is a compelling case for the gateway, with an initial focus on expanding container trade through Atlantic Canada. The gateway has a strong “value proposition” based on consideration of competitive transit times, reliability and cost competitiveness. All of Canada would benefit from development of the Atlantic Gateway as part of a national integrated transportation supply chain.

Also in October 2007, the Government of Canada, represented by the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and the Minister of ACOA, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the four Atlantic Provinces that provides a framework for collaboration on the development of the Atlantic Gateway. This agreement underlines the desire of governments to work together on this opportunity, developing a comprehensive and collaborative strategy. As part of this agreement, a federal-provincial officials committee, with representation from the four Provinces and from ACOA and Transport Canada on the federal side, was deemed the primary forum for collaboration. ACOA co-chairs the committee with the Province of New Brunswick.

6.2 Policy

ACOA's policy function provides a broad-based network of information, research and analysis to support corporate decision-making and to advise the Minister on development approaches tailored to Atlantic Canadian circumstances. This function is supported by internal and external research, in part delivered by the Atlantic Policy Research Initiative (APRI), which funds region-wide research projects, and is designed to build public policy research capacity in Atlantic Canada. The APRI exemplifies ACOA's approach to pursuing its mandate, by partnering with other research bodies to study key issues affecting the region. Partners include universities, independent public policy research institutes, business associations, other government departments and agencies, and private sector experts.

In the period 2003–2008, APRI targeted priority areas including innovation, trade and investment, entrepreneurship and business skills development,

community economic development and the analysis of key economic sectors. Research was also done on immigration, productivity and competitiveness, urban growth, and the role of universities and colleges. A list of research projects funded by the Agency, including APRI projects, can be found at:

<http://www.acoa-apecca.gc.ca/e/library/policy.shtml>. 

An independent evaluation of APRI in 2005 noted that roundtables and conferences represent effective tools for networking and dissemination of research. They provide a successful means for the exchange of ideas and building of linkages between public and private stakeholders.

ACOA's policy agenda has also included analysis to ensure that the Agency's activities are well-informed by current economic trends and issues. This has focused largely on the overall performance of the region's economy, productivity and competitiveness issues, and more detailed examination of specific industries and sectors in Atlantic Canada.

Between 2003 and 2008, ACOA was active in a number of policy-related initiatives, including the Atlantic Population Strategy (with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Industry Canada, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, and the four provincial governments); the Atlantica concept (with the Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce), and the Atlantic Gateway strategy.

Conferences, workshops, roundtables and other outreach activities supported by the APRI in the period 2003–2008 include:

- Atlantic BIOEnergy Conference
- Aboriginal Roundtable in Atlantic Canada
- Atlantica 2007; Business Without Boundaries
- Task Force on Fostering a Sustainable Salmon Farming Industry for Atlantic Canada
- Growing Technology Business in Atlantic Canada: The First Atlantic Regional Research Money Conference
- Forum on the Future of the Atlantic Economy

In New Brunswick, ACOA's policy work supported the creation of the Chaleur-Restigouche Initiative, a three-year effort to assist companies in the northeast region of New Brunswick to adjust to the closure of the Brunswick Mine and Smelter, as well as the downturn in the forestry sector. Among its notable accomplishments, ACOA has assessed over 149 potential clients, which led to projects with 40 SMEs to develop new products, find new national and international markets and improve their management skills, particularly in the areas of trade and innovation.

6.3 Advocacy

Through its advocacy work, ACOA keeps both the Minister and ACOA executives apprised of implications and impacts of government-wide priorities and activities. The Agency helps to ensure that they have the information and analysis needed to participate in the development of national policies and programs on behalf of Atlantic Canada.

*In a 2007 report, **Higher Education and Regions: Globally Competitive, Locally Engaged**, the international Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) highlighted ACOA's role in engaging regional stakeholders, noting in particular that ACOA's longevity has allowed it to experiment and to establish its credibility as an essential partner across the region – encouraging partnerships among businesses, the research community, and higher education institutions.*

ACOA's advocacy activities are also directed to industrial regional benefits and the enhancement of opportunities for Atlantic businesses to participate in federal procurement. This focuses particularly on major Crown projects that offer the potential for regional benefits.

During the period 2003-2008, ACOA increasingly directed its advocacy efforts toward strategic priorities. For instance, renewal of the Atlantic Investment Partnership in 2005 expanded the Agency's overall capacity to help SMEs compete more effectively. As trade and investment activities were redefined under the government's Global Commerce Strategy and other initiatives such as the re-engagement in the Americas, ACOA ensured coordination and cohesion between these new strategies and its activities. Other strategic priorities include aerospace and defence, aquaculture, science and technology/commercialization, energy, environmental technologies, resource industries, population and immigration, bioscience, and more recently, the Atlantic Gateway.

Science and Technology/Commercialization

ACOA works closely with other federal partners in its advocacy role. For example, ACOA has collaborated with Industry Canada in the

development of the federal government's Science and Technology Strategy and the building of innovative capacity in Atlantic Canada. The Agency has worked closely with the National Research Council on Canada's cluster initiative, with the Life Sciences Research Institute and with the Canada Foundation for Innovation, in support of Atlantic Canada's participation in these major national initiatives.

Energy and Environmental Technologies

The energy sector and resource industries are clearly significant contributors to Atlantic Canada's economy. ACOA has worked to ensure that federal policy and program decisions in these sectors offer economic benefits to Atlantic Canada. Advocacy work has focused on identifying regional opportunities and developing effective relationships with the key federal departments. To this end, ACOA facilitated the Atlantic Energy Roundtable, which focused on streamlining the regulatory environment for investment in exploration for offshore oil and gas in Atlantic Canada. ACOA has also collaborated with Natural Resources Canada and Transport Canada to establish the Wind Energy Institute of Canada, in Prince Edward Island, and the Centre for Marine Compressed Natural Gas, in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Resource Industries

ACOA formed a committee of federal resource-related departments in the region to facilitate co-operation that supports the sustainable transformation of Atlantic Canada's forest, fish and agricultural sectors. ACOA brought an Atlantic Canadian perspective to federal forestry initiatives and to the analysis of the impact of the U.S. softwood lumber trade decision. It also helped to develop the government's Ocean Action Plan, which resulted in the Smart Bay Technology Demonstration Project in Newfoundland and Labrador. This project raised the profile of Newfoundland and Labrador's ocean technology industry and strengthened the province's ocean technology cluster.

Population and Immigration

ACOA spearheaded the creation of the Atlantic Population Table, a federal-provincial working group comprising representatives of the four provincial governments and federal organizations. The Agency was also a key player in the establishment and renewal of the Atlantic Canada Metropolis Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration, Integration and Cultural Diversity.

Aquaculture

Aquaculture is of strategic importance to ACOA as it represents opportunities for wealth generation, employment creation and diversification of Atlantic Canada's rural and coastal communities. ACOA assisted Fisheries and Oceans Canada in



Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada

securing federal funding for the aquaculture industry to help address the sector's challenges and create conditions for growth in an economic and environmentally sustainable manner. Investments are targeted at improving regulatory certainty, environmental standards, certification measures, and research and innovation activities.

Aerospace and Defence

For more than two decades, ACOA has developed a strong capacity to support the efforts of Atlantic Canadian firms to successfully compete for business within the federal procurement process. The Atlantic region produces some of the world's most innovative products and services for the aerospace and defence industry. The region is recognized worldwide as Atlantic Canadian companies work with some of the industry's most influential companies, including Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Honeywell, Pratt and Whitney, and Boeing. Regional industrial benefits were mainly attributable to the Maritime Helicopter, Strategic Airlift Aircraft, and Tactical Airlift projects and to smaller, but significant, aerospace repair and overhaul contracts.

In the last five years, Atlantic Canada's participation in major Crown projects represented industrial regional benefits in excess of \$1 billion.

ACOA also supported Atlantic Canadian business in accessing non-defence public sector opportunities, notably those related to the Canadian Coast Guard and the Canadian Space Agency. In addition to activities relating to project-specific opportunities, ACOA's advocacy efforts supported a sustainable regional Aerospace and Defence Industries Association, and promoted the industry internationally through trade missions.

The government's industrial regional benefits policy allows Atlantic Canadian firms to leverage an initial involvement into a continuing presence in a winning bidders' global supply chain. Building on relationships established during production of Canada's LAV III fleet, General Dynamics Land Systems continues to source parts in Canada for new vehicle production in both the U.S. and Canada.

LAV III and Stryker vehicles are equipped with: add-on armour from DEW Engineering in Miramichi, New Brunswick; tires from Michelin in Wolfville, Nova Scotia; wiring harnesses from IMP in Halifax, Nova Scotia; components from Advanced Precision in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; and driver panels and other components from Rutter Manufacturing in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Canada's regional benefits policy opened the door to business development opportunities for regional aerospace and defence firms, and, supported by ACOA's advocacy role, Atlantic Canadian suppliers have kept it open.

6.4 Coordination

ACOA is mandated by its legislation to "coordinate the policies and programs of the Government of Canada in relation to opportunities for economic development in Atlantic Canada." To pursue its mandate, the Agency works with Federal Regional Councils, comprising senior officials of federal departments, operating in each province. The Councils help maintain coherence in the federal government's management of programs and service delivery, provide a regional perspective on federal initiatives, and help the federal government to achieve a more integrated approach to relations with the Provinces.

From 2003 to 2008, the Councils were active in a number of areas that cross departmental boundaries, such as official languages policy, promoting dialogue with the Aboriginal community, and the coordination of government efforts in support of economic development.

While the Councils represent a formal, structured approach to coordinating the federal presence in the region, the Agency also works with other federal departments on specific initiatives and areas, such as coordination and information sharing among the federal regional development agencies across Canada, delivery of specific national

initiatives on behalf of the Government of Canada (e.g. helping to coordinate approaches to the various infrastructure programs), and helping to align regional development priorities with the national policy agenda.

Coordination also takes place through working closely with the four provincial governments to explore areas of joint action between the two levels of government and strengthen the delivery of services to the public. To this end, a federal-provincial Senior Officials Committee, co-chaired by the President of ACOA and a provincial deputy minister, has been established to provide a senior level forum for discussion of strategic issues affecting the development of Atlantic Canada. For example, the Atlantic Population Strategy aims to develop a more coordinated federal/provincial approach to population challenges facing the region and address issues of recruitment and retention.

Umbrella Governance Framework – Infrastructure Prince Edward Island

In April 2005, a five-year agreement called the Umbrella Governance Framework was signed by Infrastructure Canada and ACOA, on behalf of the Government of Canada, and by the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs and the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, on behalf of the Government of Prince Edward Island.

These programs [i.e. CSIF, MRIF] are an excellent example of all three levels of government co-operating for the betterment of our cities, towns and communities.

Stan Campbell, President of the Federation of Prince Edward Island Municipalities

Under this agreement, federal, provincial and municipal leaders are mandated to plan and implement infrastructure projects delivered through four programs: the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund (CSIF I and II), worth \$60 million and representing equal investments by the Government of Canada and the Government of Prince Edward Island; the Canada-PEI Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CPEI-MRIF), worth \$65 million and representing equal investments by federal, provincial and municipal governments; the transfer of the Federal

Gas Tax under the New Deal for Cities and Communities (GTF/NDCC), worth \$37.5 million; and the Transit Fund, worth \$5.5 million. The latter two programs are funded 100% by the Government of Canada.

Budget 2007 introduced new infrastructure programming to replace the sunseting Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund and the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, and to extend the Federal Gas Tax funding. This program – the Building Canada Plan – will provide long-term, stable and predictable funding to meet infrastructure needs across Canada and will operate within the existing collaborative framework in Prince Edward Island.



Chapter 7

Looking Forward

Environmental Scan

Over the course of the next five years, ACOA's strategic directions will be driven by a combination of forces, including key national priorities, global economic trends, macroeconomic outlook, regional dynamics and the industrial structure in Atlantic Canada.

Key National Priorities

Looking forward, ACOA's priorities will reflect the objectives and principles of *Advantage Canada*, the Government of Canada's overarching economic framework, which is based on five key advantages.

- *Tax Advantage*: Reducing taxes for all Canadians and establishing the lowest tax rate on new business investment among the G7 countries.
- *Fiscal Advantage*: Eliminating Canada's total government net debt in less than a generation.
- *Entrepreneurial Advantage*: Reducing unnecessary regulation and red tape and increasing competition in the Canadian marketplace.
- *Knowledge Advantage*: Creating the best educated, most skilled and most flexible workforce in the world.
- *Infrastructure Advantage*: Building the modern infrastructure the country needs.

ACOA's mandate is most closely tied to the entrepreneurial, knowledge and infrastructure advantages and their related principles.

Global Economic Trends

Atlantic Canada has the potential to better integrate and capitalize on global supply chains, and enter new niche markets. It can also enhance existing supply chains to respond to rapid shifts in global trade, the growth in Asian markets, potential opportunities with Latin America

and the continued importance of the United States as Atlantic Canada's primary trading partner. The Americas will play an increasingly important role in Canada's trade priorities and have been identified as a priority for the Global Commerce Strategy. This is of interest to Atlantic Canada, since the region is actively pursuing trade and investment opportunities with Mexico, the Caribbean, Chile, Peru and Brazil, in areas such as energy (petroleum, wind) and pharmaceuticals. There is also a growing potential for IT sectors.

Tied closely to these concepts is the growing importance of global value chains, whereby the activity required to complete a good or service and bring it to market is becoming more fragmented across geographic boundaries and across different firms. At a very basic level, if Atlantic Canadian SMEs are to compete and integrate with global value chains, they will have to be aware of, and have access to, the skills required to manage logistics and supply chain processes within their organizations.

Macroeconomic Outlook

Macroeconomic conditions will also influence the future direction of Atlantic Canada's economy. The higher value of the Canadian dollar will continue to present a challenge to the region's export-intensive sectors, particularly the manufacturing and forestry sectors, which are also facing rising energy prices and increased competition from low-cost producers in developing countries. The higher dollar also presents a challenge to domestic producers that compete with foreign producers in the Canadian market.

There is a related risk that the turbulence in global financial markets could persist over the medium term, leading to higher business and consumer borrowing costs, reduced credit availability and weaker consumer and business confidence globally. Slower-than-expected global economic growth would put downward pressure on commodity prices, which would lead to weaker terms of trade and income growth for Atlantic Canada.

Regional Dynamics

Atlantic Canada remains one of Canada's most rural regions, with 46% (versus 20% in Canada) of the population living in rural areas (38% in remote regions compared with 15% nationally). From 2001 to 2006, while the total number of people living in Atlantic Canada remained virtually unchanged at approximately 2.3 million people, there was

considerable fluidity in terms of migration within the region and between Atlantic Canada and other regions of the country.

Over the 2001 to 2006 period, the population in the seven major urban areas in Atlantic Canada increased by 3.1%, while it fell by 2.6% in the rest of the region. These realities speak to both the importance of focusing on rural challenges in Atlantic Canada, and the importance of building on the region's urban

strengths. A key economic implication of these demographic and migration trends is the emergence of labour shortages in some segments of the region's economy.



Business and Industrial Structure in Atlantic Canada

Commercial activity in Atlantic Canada is concentrated in energy, information technologies, specialized manufacturing, mining, agri-food, professional services, tourism, telecommunications, forestry and seafood processing. In 2007, Statistics Canada reported that there were approximately 81,000 SMEs in Atlantic Canada, representing about 7% of the national total. In Atlantic Canada, SMEs account for 98% of all businesses. The SMEs have been important drivers of job creation and economic growth.

Atlantic Canada's industrial structure continues to be characterized by a large proportion of resource-based industries. Resource-based industries will continue to be important for regional development, but need to be repositioned to encompass more knowledge content so they can remain globally competitive, can deliver more value-added production, better jobs, higher value exports, and more resilient rural communities.

Current initiatives in the region's resource-based industries are focusing on a number of key areas including:

- a more competitive forest products industry that generates more value-added products in a more efficient way;
- more diverse uses of potatoes and other agricultural products, such as the production of ethanol;
- a more sustainable fishery, with emphasis on aquaculture and marketing; and
- advances in mining and energy technologies.

The development of biofuels is expected to drive expansion in several resource sectors, while responding to climate change will involve both agriculture and forestry. Eco-labelling and environmental certification will affect all resource products.

Policy and Programs' Plans and Priorities

Implicit in the Agency's work over much of its first 20 years has been a focus on helping businesses to create employment. Although high-quality jobs will continue to be important to the economic security of individuals and families going forward, the focus of ACOA's work will need to shift to meet the growing challenges of a relatively slow population growth and the aging demographic profile of the labour force in the region. In 2007, the unemployment rate in Atlantic Canada fell to 9.2%, attaining its lowest level in over 30 years. Further, labour shortages are anticipated in future years for some areas in Atlantic Canada. Thus, the Agency will give increasing emphasis to growth in productivity, competitiveness and earned incomes.

Recognizing that Atlantic Canada's economy must have a number of conditions in place for that to succeed, ACOA will continue to take a proactive approach to identifying opportunities and overcoming regional barriers to growth. ACOA's emphasis will be on fostering research and development with an emphasis on commercialization, technology adoption, business skills development, access to capital, balanced urban-rural development, and strengthened advocacy and coordination.

While the Agency's ongoing work will continue to be focused on results as outlined in the Program Activity Architecture, the following priorities have been identified as considerations in planning for the strategic outcome and internal services areas.

Enterprise Development

A major focus of Enterprise Development will be increasing the productivity and competitiveness of Atlantic Canada. ACOA will work to maximize the impact of its investment, particularly in sectors that are strategically important to the long-term success of Atlantic Canada. This will assist in the transformation to a knowledge-based economy with the emergence of more knowledge-intensive, resource-based industries and new sectors/clusters in information technology, bioscience and aerospace. Increased focus will be placed on identifying and pursuing commercialization opportunities within the existing portfolio of innovation projects. As well, the Agency will promote Atlantic Canada's capacity to carry out leading-edge R&D in specialized areas or specific sectors at the regional, national and international levels.

Community Development

ACOA has a history of working closely with communities and community-based organizations to help them respond to their economic challenges and embrace the opportunities for development. The Agency will work with these communities to strike the right balance between capitalizing on the growing opportunities of the region's urban and rural areas, and continued recognition of and ability to respond to the various economic development challenges. This means taking a strategic, regional approach to development, where communities work together to extend the benefits of emerging opportunities to the widest extent feasible and mitigating economic challenges where possible.

Policy, Advocacy and Coordination

ACOA's well-developed policy, advocacy and coordination roles are important complements to its direct support for economic development. ACOA will continue to carry out specific research in Atlantic Canada and will play a lead advocacy and coordination role developing a strategic approach with other federal line departments, provincial governments, communities and key players to create an enabling environment for industry development. Over the course of the next five years, ACOA's policy activities, including strategic analysis, economic analysis and research, will be concentrated in the strategic priorities areas as identified above.

Internal Services

ACOA's ongoing commitment to build and maintain management excellence and strong governance is focused on achieving an appropriate balance between what is achieved and how it is achieved. Consistent with the Management Accountability Framework, and with the federal thrust toward Public Service Renewal, the priority areas upon which the Agency intends to focus include:

- implementation and coordination of a strong governance and accountability framework to ensure that ACOA remains focused on results, that its programs and policies remain relevant, and that the right decisions are being made to enable the Agency to fulfill its mandate;
- enhanced capacity to collect and use performance information for informed decision-making at all levels;
- improved understanding of the risks ACOA faces, and how to best mitigate them; and
- having the right people with the right skills to support attaining business goals through comprehensive employee learning plans, training and learning opportunities, succession planning, and focused recruitment.

tout dans le but de créer un environnement favorable au développement de l'industrie. Au cours des cinq prochaines années, les activités de l'APECA dans le domaine des politiques, notamment l'analyse stratégique ainsi que l'analyse et la recherche économiques, seront centrées sur les priorités stratégiques définies plus haut.

Services internes

L'engagement soutenu de l'APECA à bâtir et à maintenir l'excellence en gestion et une gouvernance solide est axé sur un juste équilibre entre ce qui est réalisé et la façon de le réaliser. Conformément au Cadre de responsabilisation de gestion et à l'orientation du gouvernement fédéral au chapitre du renouvellement de la fonction publique, l'Agence entend mettre l'accent sur les secteurs prioritaires suivants :

- la mise en œuvre et la coordination d'un solide cadre de gouvernance et de responsabilisation pour faire en sorte qu'elle demeure axée sur les résultats, que ses programmes et ses politiques restent pertinents et qu'elle prenne les bonnes décisions pour s'acquitter de son mandat;
- une meilleure capacité de recueillir et d'utiliser l'information sur le rendement afin d'éclairer les décisions prises à tous les niveaux;
- une meilleure compréhension des risques auxquels elle doit faire face et la meilleure façon de les atténuer;
- la capacité d'aller chercher les personnes qui possèdent les compétences voulues pour permettre l'atteinte des objectifs opérationnels par des plans d'apprentissage détaillés pour les employés, des possibilités de formation et d'apprentissage, une planification de la relève et des mesures de recrutement ciblées.

Le travail de l'Agence demeurera axé sur les résultats énoncés dans l'Architecture d'activités de programme. Cependant, les priorités suivantes sont considérées comme des éléments devant être pris en compte dans la planification des résultats stratégiques et dans la prestation des services internes.

Développement des entreprises

L'activité Développement des entreprises sera principalement axée sur l'accroissement de la productivité et de la compétitivité de la région de l'Atlantique. L'APÉCA s'efforcera de maximiser l'impact de ses investissements, notamment dans les secteurs jouant un rôle stratégique important dans la prospérité à long terme de la région. Ce travail favorisera la transition vers une économie du savoir, grâce à l'émergence de nouvelles industries primaires axées sur le savoir et de nouvelles grappes des technologies de l'information, des sciences biologiques et de l'aérospatiale. Elle cherchera d'avantage à cerner et à saisir des possibilités de commercialisation dans le portefeuille actuel des projets d'innovation. En outre, l'Agence fera la promotion de la capacité de la région de réaliser des travaux de recherche-développement de pointe dans des domaines spécialisés ou des secteurs particuliers à l'échelle régionale, nationale et mondiale.

Développement des collectivités

Depuis longtemps, l'APÉCA travaille en étroite collaboration avec les collectivités et les organismes communautaires afin de les aider à relever leurs défis économiques et à saisir les possibilités de développement qui se présentent. L'Agence collaborera avec les collectivités pour tirer parti des possibilités de croissance des zones urbaines et des régions rurales de l'Atlantique tout en continuant de cerner et de surmonter les obstacles au développement économique. Pour ce faire, elle devra adopter une approche stratégique régionale à l'égard du développement, en vertu de laquelle les collectivités travailleront ensemble pour tirer le plus d'avantages possible des nouveaux débouchés et pour atténuer les défis économiques, lorsqu'il est possible de le faire.

Politiques, défense des intérêts et coordination

Les rôles bien développés de l'APÉCA en matière de politiques, de défense des intérêts et de coordination constituent des compléments importants aux mesures de soutien direct au développement économique. L'Agence continuera à mener des recherches précises dans la région et jouera un rôle de premier plan en matière de défense des intérêts et de coordination pour élaborer une approche stratégique avec d'autres ministères fédéraux, des gouvernements provinciaux, des collectivités et des intervenants clés, le

L'Agence reconnaît qu'il faut réunir un certain nombre de facteurs pour que les provinces de l'Atlantique jouissent d'une économie prospère. Elle continuera donc à adopter une approche proactive pour cerner les possibilités qui se présentent et pour aider la région à surmonter les obstacles qui l'empêchent de croître. L'APÉCA mettra l'accent sur la recherche-développement, et plus particulièrement sur la commercialisation, l'intégration des technologies, le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires, l'accès aux capitaux et le développement équilibré des milieux urbains et ruraux. De plus, elle entend jouer encore plus activement son rôle de défense des intérêts et de coordination.

L'Agence se concentrera davantage sur la croissance de la productivité, de main-d'œuvre au cours des années à venir dans certains domaines. Ainsi, son niveau le plus faible en plus de 30 ans. On prévoit des pénuries de de chômage a baissé à 9,2 % dans la région de l'Atlantique, atteignant un profil démographique vieillissant de la population active. En 2007, le taux qui découlent d'une croissance démographique relativement faible et du réorienter son travail de façon à relever les défis de plus en plus importants économiques des particuliers et des familles dans l'avenir, l'APÉCA devra d'emplois de qualité continuera de jouer un rôle important dans la sécurité a implicitement aidé les entreprises à créer des emplois. Même si la création Pendant une bonne partie de ses 20 premières années d'existence, l'Agence

Plans et priorités des politiques et des programmes

Le développement des biocarburants devrait favoriser l'expansion de plusieurs secteurs primaires. De plus, l'agriculture et l'exploitation forestière devront toutes deux participer à la recherche de solutions aux changements climatiques. L'écoétiquetage et la certification environnementale toucheront tous les produits issus de ressources naturelles.

- des progrès dans les technologies minières et énergétiques.
- l'aquaculture et le marketing;
- une industrie de la pêche plus durable qui met l'accent sur produits de l'agriculture, dont la production de l'éthanol;
- des utilisations plus diversifiées de la pomme de terre et d'autres produits à valeur ajoutée;
- concurrence et qui génère plus efficacement un nombre accru de une industrie des produits forestiers qui soutient mieux la concentrent sur de nombreux secteurs clés, notamment :
- Les initiatives lancées dans les industries primaires de la région se produits à valeur ajoutée, offrir de meilleurs emplois, exporter des produits de plus grande valeur et créer des collectivités rurales plus résilientes.

Dynamique régionale

La région de l'Atlantique demeure l'une des régions les plus rurales du Canada. En effet, 46 % de la population vit dans des zones rurales (comparativement à 20 % au Canada), et 38 % des citoyens sont établis dans des régions éloignées (contre 15 % au Canada atlantique, soit 2,3 millions de personnes, n'a pratiquement pas changé; on a cependant constaté un mouvement de migration important dans la région même et entre les provinces de l'Atlantique et d'autres régions du Canada. Au cours de cette même période, la population des sept grands centres urbains de la région de l'Atlantique a augmenté de 3,1 %, alors qu'elle a diminué de 2,6 % dans le reste de la région. Ces réalités témoignent à la fois de l'importance de mettre l'accent sur les défis ruraux du

Canada atlantique et de celle de consolider les forces des zones urbaines de la région. L'émergence de pénuries de main-d'œuvre dans certains secteurs économiques de la région constitue une conséquence économique importante de ces tendances au chapitre de la population et de la migration.

Structure d'entreprise et structure industrielle de la région de l'Atlantique

Dans les provinces de l'Atlantique, l'activité commerciale gravite autour de l'énergie, des technologies de l'information, de la fabrication spécialisée, de l'exploitation minière, de l'agroalimentaire, des services professionnels, du tourisme, des télécommunications, de l'exploitation forestière et de la transformation des fruits de mer. Selon Statistique Canada, il y avait environ 81 000 PME dans la région en 2007, ce qui représente environ 7 % du total au Canada. Dans les provinces de l'Atlantique, 98 % des entreprises sont des PME, et elles ont grandement contribué à la création d'emplois ainsi qu'à la croissance économique.

La structure industrielle de la région de l'Atlantique demeure caractérisée par une grande proportion d'industries primaires. Ces industries continueront de jouer un rôle important dans le développement régional, mais elles doivent être repositionnées de manière à englober davantage de contenu du savoir pour demeurer concurrentielles à l'échelle mondiale, créer davantage de



les chaînes d'approvisionnement existantes afin de s'adapter aux changements rapides qui surviennent dans le commerce international, à la croissance des marchés asiatiques et aux possibilités éventuelles avec l'Amérique latine et avec les États-Unis, son principal partenaire commercial. Les Amériques exerceront de plus en plus d'influence sur les priorités du Canada en matière de commerce et sont considérées comme une priorité dans le cadre de la stratégie commerciale mondiale. Cette situation présentera un intérêt pour les provinces de l'Atlantique, puisque la région explore activement les possibilités de commerce et d'investissement avec le Mexique, les Caraïbes, le Chili, le Pérou et le Brésil dans certains domaines comme l'énergie (pétrole, énergie éolienne) et les produits pharmaceutiques. De nouvelles possibilités s'offrent également aux secteurs des TI.

Il faut également mentionner l'importance grandissante des chaînes de valeur mondiales, où les activités nécessaires à la production et à la mise en marché d'un bien ou d'un service sont plus fragmentées et nécessitent la participation de différentes entreprises, sans égard aux limites géographiques. À un niveau très élémentaire, si les PME de la région de l'Atlantique veulent soutenir la concurrence dans les chaînes de valeur mondiales, elles devront avoir accès aux compétences nécessaires pour gérer la logistique et les processus liés aux chaînes d'approvisionnement au sein de leurs organisations.

Perspectives macroéconomiques

Les conditions macroéconomiques influenceront également l'orientation future de l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique. La hausse du dollar canadien continuera à poser un défi aux secteurs de la région qui exportent beaucoup, en particulier ceux de la fabrication et de l'exploitation forestière, qui doivent également faire face à la hausse des prix de l'énergie et à la concurrence croissante des producteurs à faible coût des pays en développement. La valeur élevée du dollar représente également un obstacle pour les producteurs nationaux qui font concurrence aux producteurs étrangers sur le marché canadien. Il se peut aussi que les turbulences sur les marchés financiers mondiaux persistent à moyen terme, ce qui se traduira par des coûts d'emprunt plus élevés pour les entreprises et les consommateurs, un accès plus difficile au crédit et un plus faible niveau de confiance des consommateurs et des entreprises à l'échelle planétaire. Une croissance économique mondiale plus lente que prévu entraînerait des pressions à la baisse sur le prix des produits de base, ce qui détériorerait les conditions d'échange et de croissance des revenus pour la région de l'Atlantique.

Chapitre 7

Perspectives d'avenir

Analyse de la conjoncture

Dans les cinq prochaines années, les orientations stratégiques de l'APÉCA seront dictées par plusieurs forces, y compris les grandes priorités nationales, les tendances de l'économie mondiale, les perspectives macroéconomiques, la dynamique régionale et la structure industrielle de la région de l'Atlantique.

Grandes priorités nationales

Dans l'avenir, les priorités de l'APÉCA tiendront compte des objectifs et des principes d'*Avantage Canada*, le cadre économique global du gouvernement du Canada, qui est fondé sur cinq avantages clés :

- *Avantage sur le plan de la fiscalité* – réduire les taxes et les impôts de tous les Canadiens et établir le taux d'imposition le plus bas des pays du G7 pour les investissements des entreprises;
- *Avantage sur le plan des finances* – éliminer la dette nette du Canada en moins d'une génération;
- *Avantage sur le plan de l'entrepreneuriat* – réduire la réglementation inutile et les tracasseries administratives et accroître la concurrence sur le marché canadien;
- *Avantage sur le plan du savoir* – former la main-d'œuvre la plus qualifiée, la plus qualifiée et la plus souple au monde;
- *Avantage sur le plan de l'infrastructure* – bâtir l'infrastructure moderne dont a besoin le pays.

Le mandat de l'APÉCA se rattache surtout aux avantages liés à l'entrepreneuriat, au savoir et à l'infrastructure ainsi qu'à leurs principes connexes.

Tendances de l'économie mondiale

La région de l'Atlantique a le potentiel de mieux intégrer les chaînes d'approvisionnement mondiales, d'en tirer un meilleur parti et de percevoir de nouveaux marchés à créniaux. Elle peut également consolider

l'Atlantique vise à élaborer une approche fédérale-provinciale plus coordonnée pour relever les défis démographiques de la région ainsi qu'à aborder les enjeux liés au recrutement et au maintien en poste.

Cadre général de gouvernance – Infrastructure Île-du-Prince-Édouard

En avril 2005, une entente quinquennale appelée *Cadre général de gouvernance* a été signée par Infrastructure Canada et l'APÉCA, au nom du gouvernement du Canada, ainsi que par le ministère des Affaires intergouvernementales et le ministère des Affaires communautaires et culturelles, au nom du gouvernement de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard.

Aux termes de cette entente, on a confié à des représentants du gouvernement fédéral, de la province et des municipalités la responsabilité d'élaborer et de mettre en œuvre des projets d'infrastructure devant être exécutés dans le cadre de quatre programmes : le Fonds canadien sur l'infrastructure stratégique (FCIS I et II), d'une valeur de 60 millions de dollars et représentant des sommes égales investies par le gouvernement du Canada et le gouvernement de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard;

le Fonds sur l'infrastructure municipale rurale (FIMR), Canada – Île-du-Prince-Édouard (FIMR), correspondant à des investissements égaux du gouvernement fédéral, de la province et des municipalités; le transfert des recettes tirées de la taxe fédérale sur l'essence aux termes du Nouveau pacte pour les villes et collectivités (FTE/NPVC), s'élevant à 37,5 millions de dollars, et le Fonds pour le transport en commun, d'une valeur de 5,5 millions de dollars. Le gouvernement fédéral assume la totalité du financement de ces deux derniers programmes.

Le Budget de 2007 a introduit un nouveau programme d'infrastructure venant remplacer le FCIS et le FIMR, qui s'épuisent graduellement, et prolonger le Fonds de la taxe fédérale sur l'essence. Ce programme, le Plan Chantiers Canada, fournira des fonds stables et prévisibles à long terme qui permettront de combler les besoins en infrastructure partout au Canada. À l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, le Plan Chantiers Canada sera mis en œuvre dans le cadre de collaboration actuel.



Ces programmes [FCIS, FIMR] constituent un excellent exemple de la collaboration des trois ordres de gouvernement en vue d'améliorer nos villes et nos collectivités.

Stan Campbell
Président de la Fédération des municipalités de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard

La politique sur les retombées régionales a ouvert la porte à des possibilités d'affaires pour les entreprises régionales du secteur de la défense et de l'aérospatiale, et, grâce au travail de l'APÉCA en matière de défense des intérêts, les fournisseurs de la région de l'Atlantique la gardent ouverte.

6.4 Coordination

En vertu de sa législation, l'APÉCA a pour mandat de coordonner les politiques et les programmes du gouvernement du Canada relativement aux possibilités de développement économique au Canada atlantique. Afin de remplir son mandat, l'Agence travaille de concert avec les Conseils fédéraux régionaux, composés de hauts fonctionnaires fédéraux de chacune des provinces. Les Conseils contribuent à assurer une gestion cohérente des programmes et des services fédéraux et à faire valoir le point de vue de la région pour l'élaboration d'initiatives fédérales. De plus, ils aident le gouvernement fédéral à adopter une approche plus intégrée en matière de relations fédérales-provinciales.

De 2003 à 2008, les Conseils ont pris part à plusieurs activités qui vont au-delà des limites ministérielles, comme la politique sur les langues officielles, la promotion du dialogue avec les collectivités autochtones et la coordination des efforts du gouvernement à l'appui du développement économique.

Les conseils représentent une approche officielle et structurée de la coordination de la présence du gouvernement fédéral dans la région, mais l'Agence travaille aussi avec d'autres ministères à des initiatives et à des dossiers particuliers, comme la coordination et l'échange d'information parmi les organismes fédéraux de développement régional à l'échelle du Canada, l'exécution d'initiatives nationales particulières au nom du gouvernement du Canada (p. ex. participer à la coordination de méthodes liées aux divers programmes d'infrastructure) et l'harmonisation des priorités de développement régional avec le programme d'action national.

L'Agence travaille également en étroite collaboration avec les quatre gouvernements provinciaux afin d'explorer des secteurs d'action conjointe entre les deux ordres de gouvernement et de consolider la prestation de services au public. À cet effet, un Comité de hauts fonctionnaires fédéraux-provinciaux, coprésidé par la présidente de l'APÉCA et un sous-ministre provincial, a été mis sur pied pour servir de tribune où la haute direction peut discuter d'enjeux stratégiques touchant le développement de la région de l'Atlantique. Par exemple, la Stratégie démographique de

Les véhicules VBL III et Striker sont équipés d'un blindage additionnel provenant de DEW Engineering, située à Miramichi, au Nouveau-Brunswick; de pneus fabriqués par Michelin, à Wolfville, en Nouvelle-Écosse; de faisceaux de câblage provenant d'IMP, à Halifax, en Nouvelle-Écosse; de composants d'Advanced Precision, à Dartmouth, en Nouvelle-Écosse; ainsi que de tableaux de bord et d'autres composants produits par Rutter Manufacturing, à St. John's, à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador.

L'APECA a également aidé les entreprises de l'Atlantique à profiter de certaines possibilités se présentant dans des secteurs publics autres que la défense, notamment à la Garde côtière canadienne et à l'Agence spatiale canadienne. Dans son travail de défense des intérêts, l'APECA a appuyé non seulement des activités découlant de projets précis, mais également la mise sur pied d'une association régionale durable réunissant les industries de l'aérospatiale et de la défense, tout en faisant la promotion de l'industrie à l'étranger dans le cadre de missions commerciales. La politique du gouvernement en matière de retombées industrielles et régionales permet aux entreprises de la région de l'Atlantique de profiter de leur engagement initial pour continuer d'être présentes parmi les soumissionnaires gagnants de la chaîne d'approvisionnement mondiale. En renforçant les liens établis lors de la création du parc de véhicules VBL III du Canada, General Dynamics Land Systems continue de chercher des fournisseurs de pièces au Canada pour les véhicules neufs fabriqués aux États-Unis comme au Canada.

Depuis plus de deux décennies, l'APECA consolide sa capacité de soutenir les entreprises de l'Atlantique qui présentent des soumissions dans le cadre des marchés d'approvisionnement du gouvernement fédéral. La région de l'Atlantique conçoit certains des produits et des services les plus innovateurs au monde pour l'industrie de l'aérospatiale et de la défense. Elle est reconnue dans le monde entier, du fait que certaines entreprises de l'Atlantique travaillent avec des entreprises qui figurent parmi les plus influentes de l'industrie, dont Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Honeywell, Pratt & Whitney et Boeing. Les retombées industrielles et régionales étaient principalement attribuables à divers grands projets – hélicoptères maritimes, acquisition d'avions de transport stratégique et acquisition d'aéronefs de transport aérien tactique – ainsi qu'à des contrats plus petits, mais importants, de réparation et de révision en aérospatiale.

Aérospatiale et défense

Dans les cinq dernières années la participation de la région de l'Atlantique aux grands projets de l'État a généré des retombées industrielles de plus d'un milliard de dollars.

Industries primaires

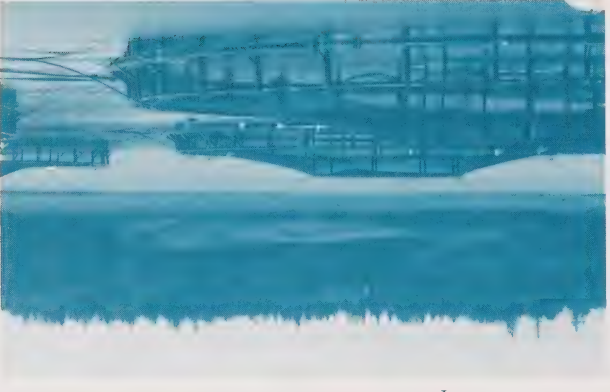
L'APECA a mis sur pied dans la région un comité, formé de représentants de ministères fédéraux dont le mandat porte sur les ressources naturelles, afin de favoriser l'établissement de liens de coopération qui faciliteront la transformation durable des secteurs de l'exploitation forestière, des pêches et de l'agriculture dans la région de l'Atlantique. L'APECA a fait valoir le point de vue de la région de l'Atlantique dans les initiatives en foresterie du gouvernement fédéral et l'analyse des impacts de la décision des États-Unis concernant le bois d'œuvre résineux. Elle a également contribué à l'élaboration du Plan d'action pour les océans, qui s'est traduit par le projet de démonstration technologique de Smart Bay à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador. Ce projet a mieux fait connaître l'industrie des technologies océanologiques de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador et a renforcé la grappe de technologies océanologiques de la province.

Population et immigration

L'APECA a dirigé la création de la Table démographique de l'Atlantique, un groupe de travail fédéral-provincial qui compte parmi ses membres des représentants des quatre gouvernements provinciaux et d'organismes fédéraux. Elle a aussi été un intervenant clé dans l'établissement et le renouvellement du Centre d'excellence Métropolis Atlantique pour la recherche sur l'immigration, l'intégration et la diversité culturelle.

Aquaculture

L'aquaculture revêt une importance stratégique pour l'APECA, puisqu'elle présente des possibilités de production de richesses, de création d'emplois et de diversification économique des collectivités rurales et côtières du Canada atlantique. L'APECA a aidé le ministère des Pêches et des Océans à obtenir des fonds du gouvernement fédéral pour permettre à l'industrie aquacole de relever les défis qui se présentent dans ce secteur et de créer des conditions favorables à une croissance durable sur le plan économique et environnemental. Les investissements visent à améliorer le cadre réglementaire, les normes environnementales, les mesures d'homologation et les activités de recherche et d'innovation.



le renouvellement en 2005 du Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique a permis à l'APÉCA d'aider les PME à accroître leur compétitivité. Certaines activités liées au commerce et à l'investissement ont été redéfinies dans le cadre de la Stratégie commerciale mondiale du gouvernement et d'autres initiatives telles que le renouvellement de l'engagement du Canada à l'égard des Amériques, et l'APÉCA a assuré la coordination et la cohésion entre ces nouvelles stratégies et ses propres activités. Les autres priorités stratégiques incluent l'aéropatial et la défense, l'aquaculture, la commercialisation des sciences et des technologies, l'énergie, les technologies environnementales, les industries primaires, la population et l'immigration, les sciences biologiques et, depuis peu, la Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique.

Commercialisation des sciences et des technologies

L'APÉCA travaille en étroite collaboration avec d'autres partenaires fédéraux afin d'assumer son rôle en matière de défense des intérêts. Par exemple, elle a travaillé de concert avec Industrie Canada pour élaborer la Stratégie scientifique et technologique du gouvernement fédéral ainsi que pour renforcer la capacité d'innovation au Canada atlantique. En outre, l'Agence s'est allié au Conseil national de recherches du Canada pour mettre sur pied le projet de grappes du Canada, ainsi qu'à l'Institut de recherche sur les sciences de la vie et à la Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation, afin d'aider la région de l'Atlantique à participer de façon plus active à ces importants projets nationaux.

Energie et technologies environnementales

Le secteur de l'énergie et les industries primaires contribuent grandement à l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique. L'APÉCA a veillé à ce que les décisions concernant les politiques et les programmes fédéraux dans ces secteurs apportent des retombées économiques aux provinces de l'Atlantique. En accomplissant son travail de défense des intérêts, elle a cherché à cerner les possibilités de la région et à établir un réseau de relations efficace avec des ministères fédéraux clés. Dans cette optique, l'APÉCA a participé à la Table ronde sur l'énergie de l'Atlantique, qui avait comme objectif de moderniser le cadre de réglementation des investissements dans l'exploration pétrolière et gazière au large des côtes de l'Atlantique. L'Agence a également collaboré avec Ressources naturelles Canada et Transports Canada en vue d'établir deux instituts de recherche sur l'énergie : l'Institut canadien de l'énergie éolienne, à l'Ile-du-Prince-Édouard, et le Centre for Marine Compressed Natural Gas, à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador.

grande partie sur le rendement global de l'économie de la région et sur les enjeux de productivité et de compétitivité, et elle prévoit un examen détaillé des industries et des secteurs propres à la région de l'Atlantique. De 2003 à 2008, l'APECA a pris part à un certain nombre d'initiatives liées aux politiques, dont la Stratégie démographique de l'Atlantique (en collaboration avec Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada, Industrie Canada, Ressources humaines et Développement social Canada et les quatre gouvernements provinciaux), le concept Atlantica (en collaboration avec la Chambre de commerce des provinces de l'Atlantique) ainsi que la stratégie liée à la Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique.

Dans un rapport de 2007 intitulé *Enseignement supérieur et régions : Concurrency mondiale, engagement local*, l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques a souligné le rôle de l'APECA dans la mobilisation des intervenants régionaux. Elle a insisté notamment sur le fait que, de par sa longévité, l'Agence a pu mener des expériences et asseoir sa crédibilité en tant que partenaire essentiel partout dans la région – favorisant ainsi les partenariats entre les entreprises, le milieu de la recherche et les établissements d'enseignement supérieur.

149 évaluations qui ont permis à 40 PME de mettre au point de nouveaux produits, de trouver de nouveaux marchés au pays et à l'étranger et de partager leurs compétences en gestion, notamment dans les domaines de l'innovation et du commerce.

6.3 Défense des intérêts

Par son travail de défense des intérêts, l'APECA tient le ministre et les hauts fonctionnaires de l'Agence au courant de l'impact des priorités et des activités pangouvernementales. Elle veille à ce qu'ils détiennent l'information et les résultats d'analyse nécessaires pour participer à l'élaboration de politiques et de programmes nationaux au nom de la région de l'Atlantique.

Les activités de défense des intérêts de l'APECA visent également à accroître les retombées industrielles régionales et à aider les entreprises de l'Atlantique à participer aux activités d'approvisionnement du gouvernement fédéral. L'Agence met notamment l'accent sur les grands projets de l'État qui engendrent des retombées pour la région.

Pendant la période de 2003 à 2008, l'APECA a concentré son travail de défense des intérêts sur les priorités stratégiques. Par exemple,

entente, un comité fédéral-provincial regroupant des représentants des quatre provinces atlantiques, de l'APECA et de Transports Canada s'est avéré le principal forum de collaboration. L'APECA et le gouvernement du Nouveau-Brunswick président conjointement le comité.

6.2 Politiques

Le travail stratégique de l'APECA crée un réseau d'information, de recherche et d'analyse de grande portée qui éclaire la prise de décisions générales et qui sert à conseiller le ministre sur les approches de développement adaptées

au contexte de la région de l'Atlantique. Cette fonction est appuyée par des projets de recherche interne et externe menés en partie dans le cadre de la Mesure de recherche stratégique visant la région de l'Atlantique (MRSRA), qui finance des projets de recherche à l'échelle de la région et vise à renforcer les capacités de recherche sur les politiques publiques au Canada atlantique. La MRSRA incarne l'approche à l'aide

de d'autres organismes de recherche afin

d'étudier les enjeux importants qui touchent la région. Parmi les partenaires, on compte des universités, des instituts de recherche en politiques publiques indépendants, des associations d'entreprises, d'autres agences et ministères et des experts du secteur privé.

Au cours de la période de 2003 à 2008, la MRSRA a ciblé des domaines prioritaires tels que l'innovation, le commerce et l'investissement, l'entrepreneuriat et le

perfectionnement des compétences en affaires,

le développement économique des collectivités et

l'analyse de secteurs économiques clés. Des recherches ont également

été effectuées sur l'immigration, la productivité et la compétitivité,

la croissance urbaine ainsi que le rôle des universités et des collèges.

On peut consulter une liste des projets de recherche financés par

l'Agence, dont les projets de la MRSRA, en visitant le site

<http://www.aocoa-apeca.gc.ca/f/library/policy.shtml>. ☺

Le programme stratégique de l'APECA comprend également une analyse visant à garantir que ses activités tiennent compte des tendances économiques et des enjeux actuels. Cette analyse est centrée en

- De 2003 à 2008, la MRSRA a financé des conférences, des ateliers, des tables rondes et d'autres activités de diffusion d'information, notamment :
 - Conférence sur la bioénergie en Atlantique;
 - Table ronde des Autochtones au Canada atlantique;
 - Atlantica 2007 – *Business Without Boundaries*;
 - Groupe de travail visant à favoriser la durabilité de l'industrie salomonicole au Canada atlantique;
 - Croissance de la technologie dans le monde des affaires au Canada atlantique : première conférence régionale de l'Atlantique de Research Money;
 - Forum sur l'avenir de l'économie du Canada atlantique.

Selon une évaluation indépendante de la MRSRA effectuée en 2003, les tables rondes et les conférences représentent des outils efficaces pour le réseautage et la diffusion de la recherche. Ce sont de bons moyens d'échanger des idées et de créer des liens entre les intervenants du secteur public et ceux du secteur privé.

nationale et internationale du Canada. Dans le Budget de 2007, le gouvernement fédéral a annoncé la création d'un fonds de 2,1 milliards de dollars – le Fonds national pour les portes d'entrée et les passages frontaliers – et l'élaboration d'un Cadre de politique national sur les portes et les corridors commerciaux stratégiques. Le discours du Trône de 2007 metait en valeur la Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique comme point d'entrée de la côte Est qui donne accès, de partout dans le monde, aux marchés nord-américains.

La transformation et l'accroissement rapides des structures de commerce et de transport à l'échelle mondiale reposent principalement sur les chaînes d'approvisionnement mondiales, qui sont de plus en plus efficaces et complexes. Les composantes qui sont fabriquées dans différentes parties du monde doivent être acheminées le plus rapidement possible au lieu de l'assemblage final d'un produit. Dans ce système intégré, le transbordement efficace des biens entre deux moyens de transport, notamment du transport terrestre au transport maritime et vice-versa, est essentiel. Le transport des produits assemblés jusqu'aux marchés est tout aussi important. Le mouvement des produits entre les économies émergentes de l'Asie et l'Amérique du Nord constitue un élément particulièrement important de la croissance du commerce mondial.

L'APECA et ses partenaires continuent de commander des recherches approfondies sur ce réseau de transports, soit les transports maritimes, ferroviaire, routier et aérien. Ces recherches visaient à définir les possibilités et les défis liés au développement du concept de Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique afin de fournir une base permettant aux partenaires d'élaborer des politiques et des programmes adaptés. Les résultats de l'analyse de rentabilisation de la Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique ont été publiés en octobre 2007. Ce rapport, qui réunit des arguments irréfutables en faveur de la porte d'entrée, met d'abord l'accent sur la croissance du marché des conteneurs dans la région de l'Atlantique. La Porte d'entrée a une bonne « proposition de valeur » compte tenu des temps de transit concurrentiels, de la fiabilité et de la compétitivité des coûts. L'exploitation de la Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique comme maillon d'une chaîne d'approvisionnement nationale intégrée profiterait à l'ensemble du Canada. En octobre 2007, le gouvernement du Canada, représenté par le ministre des Transports, de l'Infrastructure et des Collectivités et par le ministre de l'APECA, a signé avec les quatre provinces de l'Atlantique un protocole d'entente qui fournit un cadre de collaboration pour le développement du concept de Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique. Cette entente souligne la volonté des différents ordres de gouvernement de travailler ensemble à ce projet, en élaborant une stratégie concertée globale. Dans le cadre de cette

Le gouvernement du Canada a reconnu les importantes possibilités de développement économique qu'offrent les portes d'entrée et les corridors comme liens d'infrastructure clés dans les chaînes d'approvisionnement

Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique

La Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique illustre la façon dont l'APECA utilise ses activités liées à l'élaboration de politiques, à la défense des intérêts et à la coordination pour avantager la région de l'Atlantique et le Canada.

Au nom du gouvernement du Canada, l'APECA joue un important rôle de coordination dans l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre des politiques et des initiatives nationales se rapportant aux provinces de l'Atlantique. Pour accomplir ce travail, elle mobilise d'autres ministères fédéraux, des gouvernements provinciaux, le milieu des affaires ainsi que des universités et des collèges pour les amener à adopter une approche coordonnée à l'égard des priorités stratégiques.

Les activités de défense des intérêts ont pour but de promouvoir les intérêts de la région dans l'élaboration des politiques et des programmes nationaux et de maximiser les retombées industrielles régionales provenant des marchés publics.

L'APECA joue un rôle important en sensibilisant le gouvernement fédéral aux défis et aux possibilités économiques de la région de l'Atlantique. Son travail en matière de politiques sert de base pour l'élaboration de priorités et d'initiatives stratégiques, la conception de programmes, l'élaboration de politiques nationales et les relations fédérales-provinciales. Tout en effectuant de la recherche à l'intérieur, l'Agence fait appel à des partenaires des secteurs public et privé et à des organismes de recherche pour mener des recherches approfondies et des analyses détaillées de certains enjeux importants touchant la région.

6.1 Aperçu

Politiques, défense des intérêts et coordination

Chapitre 6

la Mesure d'adaptation du chantier naval de Saint John. Ce programme de 55 millions de dollars a été conçu de manière à créer des possibilités de réaménagement pour compenser la fermeture du chantier naval de Saint John et pour aider à créer de nouveaux débouchés industriels au Nouveau-Brunswick. Dans le cadre de cette initiative, l'APECA a accordé des fonds au nom du gouvernement du Canada pour la réalisation d'études de faisabilité et de travaux de préparation de terrain. Elle a également versé une contribution de 35 millions de dollars pour aider à la construction d'une usine de panneaux de gypse à l'ancien emplacement du chantier naval. Irving Shipbuilding Inc. a ajouté 55 millions de dollars de ses propres fonds à l'investissement du gouvernement du Canada; le total pourra donc atteindre 110 millions de dollars et favorisera la création de nouvelles possibilités industrielles pour les Néo-Brunswickois.

En avril 2003, le Fonds d'investissement stratégique dans les collectivités de l'APECA s'est enrichi de l'Initiative d'adaptation à court terme, qui vise à atténuer les répercussions à court terme de la fermeture de la pêche de la morue dans l'océan Atlantique et dans le golfe du Saint-Laurent. Grâce à l'Initiative d'adaptation à court terme, 192 projets ont été approuvés pour une contribution totale de 31,6 millions de dollars.

Comme la région de l'Atlantique dépend encore fortement des secteurs primaires, elle est confrontée à de grands défis en matière de rajustement économique. Le gouvernement du Canada a chargé l'APÉCA de mobiliser ses programmes et ses ressources à l'appui de mesures d'intervention spéciale et de s'associer à d'autres intervenants pour élaborer une intervention efficace et rapide à l'échelle locale. Au nombre des défis économiques à relever, citons la fermeture de bases militaires et le déclin de la pêche de la morue dans l'Atlantique Nord.

Les mesures d'intervention visent à atténuer les incidences à court terme sur les collectivités et les travailleurs ainsi qu'à faciliter le rajustement économique par la diversification de l'assise économique. Les mesures d'intervention à court terme ont donné lieu à la création de nouvelles possibilités d'affaires et à une diversification économique chez les collectivités touchées par le déclin d'industries, comme en témoigne

5.8 Mesures d'intervention spéciale

Les changements qui surviennent dans la conjoncture économique des industries ou des entreprises peuvent avoir des répercussions majeures à l'échelle locale, notamment dans le cas des collectivités monoindustrielles des régions rurales.

Le projet de large bande du Nouveau-Brunswick

Total :	
Gouvernement du Canada :	16,5 millions de dollars
Gouvernement du Nouveau-Brunswick :	12,5 millions de dollars
Secteur privé :	15,6 millions de dollars
44,6 millions de dollars	

5.7 Programmes d'infrastructure

La mise en place et le maintien d'une infrastructure publique de qualité sont essentiels au développement durable et à la prospérité économique. Les installations d'adduction d'eau potable et de traitement des déchets, les autoroutes, les routes municipales, les ponts et les réseaux de transport en commun sont tous des éléments qui influent sur le potentiel de croissance économique et qui ont d'importantes incidences environnementales. Il faut donc concevoir des programmes pour renouveler et construire une infrastructure au moyen d'investissements qui protègent l'environnement et qui appuient la croissance économique à long terme.

L'APÉCA travaille en collaboration avec Infrastructure Canada et les gouvernements des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique afin d'exécuter des programmes d'infrastructure fédéraux tels que le Fonds sur l'infrastructure municipale rurale et le Fonds canadien sur l'infrastructure stratégique (FCIS). Mis en place en 2003, le FCIS devrait être en vigueur jusqu'en 2013.

Le FCIS sert à financer les grands projets d'infrastructure qui revêtent une importance stratégique pour la région. Le projet Harbour Solutions à Halifax, en Nouvelle-Écosse, représente un exemple d'investissement majeur. Ce projet d'infrastructure – le plus important de l'histoire d'Halifax – vise essentiellement à reconstruire la plomberie de la ville au moyen de centaines de kilomètres de canalisations souterraines. Trois nouvelles stations d'épuration des eaux usées, une installation de traitement des biosolides et plusieurs nouveaux postes de pompage seront construits ou remis à neuf. La ville d'Halifax pourra ainsi épurer environ 150 millions de litres d'eaux usées non traitées qui, auparavant, se jetaient tous les jours dans le port d'Halifax.

Harbour Solutions – 60 millions de dollars pour couvrir le total des coûts du projet s'élevant à 333 millions de dollars

Les sommes que l'APÉCA investit dans l'infrastructure servent aussi à financer des projets permettant une connexion Internet grande capacité. Le projet de large bande du Nouveau-Brunswick a permis à 90 % des résidences et à 95 % des entreprises de la province d'avoir un accès Internet à haute capacité. En outre, la totalité des centres régionaux de soins de santé, des parcs commerciaux et des collectivités des Premières nations ont désormais accès à Internet.

5.6 Développement économique des Autochtones

Les Mikmaq, les Malécites, les Innus, les Inuits et les Métis représentent les peuples autochtones de la région de l'Atlantique et comptent pour environ 6 % de la population autochtone du Canada.

Les ministères fédéraux se partagent la responsabilité d'aider les communautés autochtones à relever les défis sociaux et économiques complexes auxquels elles sont confrontées. Même si l'APECA n'a pas de programme spécifique pour les collectivités autochtones, elle s'associe avec un grand nombre d'organismes autochtones et de ministères fédéraux et provinciaux pour renforcer les capacités économiques de ces collectivités.

Par exemple, en septembre 2007, l'APECA s'est alliée au ministre des Affaires indiennes et du Nord, au ministre des Pêches et des Océans et au gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Écosse pour annoncer un projet de recherche quadriennal ayant pour but de favoriser le développement économique des Autochtones dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. Dirigé par l'Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs Secretariat Inc. en collaboration avec un groupe de onze universités de la région de l'Atlantique, ce projet de recherche prévoit l'organisation d'ateliers visant à améliorer la prise de décisions stratégiques, des recherches sur les besoins des collectivités autochtones et la constitution d'un répertoire de données et d'analyses portant sur le développement économique autochtone.

Fonds de développement des entreprises autochtones

Grâce à un partenariat de financement, l'APECA et l'Uinooweg Development Group (UDG) créent des possibilités économiques et des perspectives d'emploi pour les entrepreneurs autochtones. L'UDG, société de financement autochtone qui fournit des conseils et des prêts aux entrepreneurs autochtones, administre le Fonds de développement des entreprises autochtones (FDEA), mis en place en 2004 pour créer un partenariat avec l'APECA. Ce fonds de six millions de dollars permet l'octroi de prêts à faible taux d'intérêt pour la création, la modernisation ou l'expansion d'entreprises. Le FDEA a considérablement amélioré les possibilités d'accès aux capitaux des entrepreneurs autochtones, et le nombre régulier de prêts qui ont été consentis dans les trois dernières années témoigne de son succès.

Nous sommes très heureux de travailler avec l'APECA à l'exécution de cette importante initiative. Comme les entreprises autochtones sont présentes dans tous les secteurs de l'économie, le potentiel de croissance est considérable. Le Fonds de développement des entreprises autochtones nous aidera grandement à atteindre nos objectifs.

Chef Terry Paul
Président du conseil d'administration
Uinooweg Development Group Inc.

revenir par la suite et explorer leurs possibilités de carrière. Cette initiative est un partenariat qui regroupe l'APECA, la Société de développement de la Baie acadienne et la région Evangeline, dans le comté de Prince-Ouest. Grâce à un accord d'encadrement, les participants acquièrent de nouvelles compétences et de nouvelles connaissances, tout en constituant un réseau de contacts dans leur domaine d'intérêt. L'APECA a contribué pour 224 820 \$ au projet.

Depuis longtemps, l'Agence travaille à appuyer des projets touristiques qui contribuent à la croissance économique de la région. Par ses investissements, elle appuie l'amélioration de l'infrastructure et la promotion de la culture afin de mettre en valeur les cultures uniques des populations acadiennes et autochtones de la région de l'Atlantique.

Le Pays de la Sagouine Boutouche (Nouveau-Brunswick)

Il y a plus de dix ans que l'Agence a commencé à soutenir Le Pays de la Sagouine, et ses investissements dépassent maintenant les 2,5 millions de dollars.

Grâce au Pays de la Sagouine, reproduction d'un hameau acadien inspiré du village de la célèbre romancière Antonine Maillet, et à son personnage le mieux connu, *La Sagouine*, la ville de Boutouche, au Nouveau-Brunswick, qui compte une population de 2 500 personnes, accueille quelque 65 000 touristes durant l'été. Tout au long d'une saison touristique allongée, la ville prend vie avec du théâtre, de la musique, de la comédie et de la danse, qui permettent aux visiteurs de s'immerger dans la culture acadienne. La ville de Boutouche est une petite collectivité qui réalise de grandes choses. Le succès du Pays de la Sagouine illustre clairement la valeur et l'importance de relever la vitalité des communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire.

Les investissements de l'APECA dans Le Pays de la Sagouine ont aidé à mettre en place l'infrastructure essentielle au développement économique d'une région rurale du Nouveau-Brunswick, en tirant profit de la capacité des forces et des possibilités de la ville de Boutouche. Ce soutien de longue date témoigne de l'engagement de l'APECA à l'égard de la croissance soutenue des communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire partout au Canada.

Cet investissement est essentiel à la croissance continue du Pays de la Sagouine. Grâce aux rénovations prévues, nous avons pu allonger notre saison, enrichir notre calendrier d'activités et planifier notre croissance future.

Paul LeBlanc
Directeur général
Le Pays de la Sagouine

Le centre de SSU sert un marché immédiat de 3 400 étudiants et s'attend à un peu plus de 10 000 inscriptions sur trois ans. L'APECA a établi un partenariat avec le Marine Institute pour développer l'infrastructure du centre, ce qui a permis de diversifier encore davantage l'assise économique de la collectivité de Stephenville tout en tirant parti de l'expertise et des atouts existants.

5.5 Communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire

La région de l'Atlantique renferme le tiers des francophones vivant dans les communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire (CLOSM) au Canada. Environ 275 000 des personnes qui s'identifient en tant que francophones habitent dans des zones rurales. Un taux de chômage supérieur à la moyenne, une population vieillissante, une décroissance démographique et un manque de possibilités de développement économique durable constituent quelques-uns des défis auxquels doivent faire face ces collectivités.

En s'associant à des groupes communautaires représentatifs ainsi qu'à des ministères fédéraux et provinciaux et à des administrations municipales, l'APECA contribue à créer des possibilités économiques qui répondent aux besoins de ces collectivités. En outre, elle joue un rôle actif dans la mise en œuvre de l'une des exigences de la *Loi sur les langues officielles* du Canada, soit de relever la vitalité des communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire.

Un exemple de cette collaboration est le Partenariat culturel et économique du Canada atlantique (PCECA). Créé en 2002, le PCECA est une mesure triennale, financée conjointement par le ministère du Patrimoine canadien et l'APECA, visant à stimuler le développement économique par des initiatives culturelles ainsi qu'à mettre en valeur l'histoire et la diversité culturelle de la région de l'Atlantique. Ce programme panatlantique au budget de dix millions de dollars a permis de financer 76 projets, dont un soutien à l'organisation du troisième Congrès mondial acadien qui a eu lieu en Nouvelle-Écosse en 2004. Une évaluation du PCECA a permis de conclure que le partenariat a été fructueux et qu'il a fait ressortir la contribution de la culture à la croissance économique des provinces de l'Atlantique.

Le projet PERCE, initiative de 310 000 \$ réalisée à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, représente un autre partenariat réussi qui visait à encourager les jeunes Acadiens et francophones à aller étudier à l'extérieur de la province pour

Au total, dix millions de dollars sont investis chaque année dans le développement économique des CLOSM de la région de l'Atlantique.

Festival international Couleurs celtiques Cap-Breton (Nouvelle-Écosse)

Depuis 1997, le Festival international Couleurs celtiques est un événement essentiel à la mise en valeur de la culture, de l'industrie musicale et de la beauté automnale du Cap-Breton. Ce festival annuel met en vedette des centaines de musiciens du Cap-Breton et de partout dans le monde, attire 7 000 visiteurs venant de plus de 20 pays et tire parti du dynamisme de près de 1 500 bénévoles dévoués de l'île. Le Festival international Couleurs celtiques a solidement établi une saison intermédiaire automnale et, grâce à l'appui de l'APÉCA, génère des retombées économiques de plus de 5,1 millions de dollars par année.

En 2005, l'APÉCA a établi un partenariat de financement quinquennal avec les organisateurs du Festival international Couleurs celtiques et leur a versé 800 000 \$ du Fonds des collectivités innovatrices afin de soutenir l'infrastructure et la création de produits. Événement de renommée mondiale, le festival est souvent considéré comme l'un des fleurons du calendrier touristique de la région de l'Atlantique, grâce à sa viabilité à long terme et à son succès croissant des onze dernières années.

Les prix reçus par le Festival international Couleurs celtiques attestent bien l'excellence de cette attraction touristique. Citons notamment le prix de l'événement de l'année de l'Association de l'industrie touristique du Canada en 2007, le prix de l'événement de l'année de l'Association de la musique de la côte est en 2005, en 2006 et en 2007, le prix du meilleur événement culturel d'Attractions Canada en 2001 et le prix du meilleur événement de l'American Bus Association en 2001. Ce festival stimule l'activité économique et fait honneur à la culture, à la musique et à la beauté du Cap-Breton.

Marine Institute – Centre de formation en santé-sécurité et en intervention d'urgence (SSIU) Stephenville (Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador)

Le Marine Institute se sert du terrain d'entraînement unique de l'aéroport de Stephenville pour offrir une formation certifiée en santé-sécurité et en intervention d'urgence dans des domaines liés à l'exploitation pétrolière et gazière, à la pêche, au transport maritime et à l'aviation. L'APÉCA a contribué pour 1,36 million de dollars à ce projet de 3,05 millions de dollars, qui, selon les prévisions, aura des retombées annuelles de plus de un million de dollars.

Truro Investment Cooperative Limited –

Marigold Cultural Centre

Truro (Nouvelle-Écosse)

Le Marigold Cultural Centre est un exemple d'initiative, définie et dirigée par la collectivité, que l'APECA et d'autres partenaires ont appuyée. En 2003, la Colchester Regional Development Agency (CoRDA) a commandé une stratégie sectorielle qui recommandait que la culture devienne l'un des quatre secteurs à exploiter pour renforcer l'assise économique de la région des comtés de Colchester et de Cumberland. La CoRDA et des dirigeants d'entreprises de Truro ont reconnu qu'une collectivité culturelle dynamique peut être un moteur économique tout en attirant et en retenant des travailleurs qualifiés et des familles en quête d'une bonne qualité de vie.

Propriété renovée du centre-ville, le Marigold Cultural Centre est un bâtiment multifonctionnel de 10 000 pi² qui renferme des installations pour les arts visuels et les arts de la scène, un centre d'éducation artistique, une galerie d'art, le temple de la renommée des sports de Truro et des bureaux d'affaires. Un partenariat communautaire qui réunit le milieu des affaires du centre-ville, la municipalité de Truro, le Cobeguid Arts Council, la CoRDA, le ministère du Développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse et l'APECA a été créé afin de recueillir des fonds pour les renovations. La collectivité a amassé près de un million de dollars sur l'investissement total de 1,48 million de dollars. L'APECA, quant à elle, a versé 210 000 \$.

L'activité générée par le Marigold Cultural Centre aura des retombées sur les entreprises existantes, telles que les restaurants et les lieux de divertissement. En outre, elle aidera à attirer d'autres entreprises qui souhaitent tirer parti du succès de cette initiative, et elle contribuera à l'intégrité patrimoniale et artistique de la collectivité multiculturelle grâce à des spectacles, à des expositions et à la vente d'œuvres d'art aux visiteurs et aux résidents. Le projet a créé une impression durable chez les résidents de Truro en leur montrant qu'ils sont capables d'accomplir des choses dans leur collectivité. En s'associant aux entreprises locales et à la municipalité, la collectivité a créé un centre où les gens peuvent se rencontrer, s'exprimer et se divertir. Cette installation pourrait également faire naître ce que Richard Florida, économiste de renom, appelle la « classe créative » de la collectivité de Truro.

Le FISC de l'APÉCA a été géré en tant que programme quinquennal découplant du Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique du gouvernement du Canada, qui a été annoncé en juin 2000. Une évaluation sommative effectuée en mars 2008 révèle que le FISC était un programme efficace et qu'il a contribué au développement économique de la région de l'Atlantique. En outre, l'évaluation indique que le FISC était favorablement perçu par les collectivités bénéficiaires. Plus précisément, elle révèle que le programme :

- répondait aux besoins des collectivités de la région de l'Atlantique;
- était lié aux priorités pangouvernementales;
- s'inscrivait dans le mandat de l'APÉCA;
- répondait aux besoins des collectivités et renforçait leur capacité de lancer des initiatives de développement économique;
- a produit les résultats attendus du côté de l'infrastructure;
- a profité aux entreprises et aux résidents de ces collectivités d'un point de vue social et économique;
- complétait d'autres programmes de l'APÉCA et d'autres programmes fédéraux et provinciaux.

Le FCI, programme quinquennal au budget de 175 millions de dollars, a été introduit en juillet 2005 comme élément de la phase II du Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique. Ce programme vise principalement à aider les régions rurales à consolider et à diversifier leurs économies. Le FCI tire profit des possibilités et des forces existantes pour aider les collectivités à développer des secteurs d'activité concurrentiels, à consolider leur infrastructure et à renforcer leur capacité de relever les défis qui se présentent au chapitre du développement économique.

Le déploiement d'une infrastructure à large bande est un exemple d'investissement dans les collectivités des provinces de l'Atlantique. Les collectivités ont à tout prix besoin d'un accès rapide à Internet pour croître et soutenir la concurrence dans l'économie mondiale. C'est dans cette optique que l'Agence a investi plus de 47 millions de dollars dans de nombreux projets exécutés dans les quatre provinces pour soutenir les collectivités qui n'avaient pas accès à un réseau à large bande.

Les profils qui suivent illustrent l'importance des investissements de l'APÉCA pour la croissance économique et la viabilité sociale des collectivités rurales de la région de l'Atlantique.

Depuis 2005, le FCI a investi 155 millions de dollars dans 379 projets. Ces sommes ont amené d'autres sources à faire des investissements supplémentaires de 222 millions de dollars.

De 2003 à 2008, l'Agence a administré deux programmes d'investissement dans les collectivités, soit le Fonds d'investissement stratégique dans les collectivités (FISC) et, depuis 2005, le Fonds des collectivités innovatrices (FCI). Ces programmes lui ont permis d'accorder des contributions non remboursables à des entités non commerciales et à des organismes sans but lucratif, par exemple des associations de développement local, des municipalités et des organismes municipaux, des instituts de commerce ou de technologie, des associations d'entreprises, des associations de développement économique, des coopératives locales, des universités et d'autres établissements d'enseignement.

L'APECA s'associe à des collectivités en faisant des investissements stratégiques dans l'infrastructure, le renforcement des capacités communautaires et le développement du secteur des affaires. Ces investissements stratégiques tiennent compte des priorités et des plans de développement économique des collectivités. Il s'agit d'une autre étape du modèle de développement des collectivités de l'APECA. Lorsqu'une stratégie est élaborée, l'Agence, en collaboration avec ses partenaires, investit dans les possibilités définies par les collectivités. Ce premier pas vers la mise en œuvre du plan de développement d'une collectivité ou d'un secteur fournit souvent à la collectivité la capacité dont elle a besoin pour poursuivre ses objectifs.

5.4 Investissement dans les collectivités

chantiers navals. Bénéficiant d'un soutien d'organismes fédéraux et provinciaux, dont la CBDC Cabot, les nouveaux associés se sont énergiquement taillé une place sur le marché américain.

Genoa Design International Ltd. s'est fait connaître de façon constante dans le milieu des entreprises de construction navale des États-Unis et du Canada en tant que fournisseur de dessins de production, de dessins de détail techniques et de modèles tridimensionnels de haute qualité.

Récemment, Genoa a percé le marché européen.

Parmi ses employés, Genoa compte plusieurs Terre-Neuviens qui, après avoir travaillé dans les champs de pétrole de l'Ouest canadien, sont revenus vivre dans la province.

Depuis 2003, l'APECA a puise 161 millions de dollars dans le Fonds d'investissement stratégique dans les collectivités pour financer 539 projets. Ces sommes ont amené les partenaires de l'APECA à y investir à leur tour plus de 137 millions de dollars.

L'alliance stratégique établie entre l'APECA et les CBDC a contribué à créer une infrastructure communautaire efficace tout en rendant les services gouvernementaux plus accessibles. Les deux exemples qui suivent témoignent de la façon dont ce partenariat aide les entrepreneurs et les collectivités de la région de l'Atlantique.

Fibre-Isle International

Mont Carmel (Ile-du-Prince-Édouard)

Le désir de voir davantage de produits de fabrication locale a donné à deux entrepreneurs de l'île l'inspiration requise pour démarrer leur propre entreprise. En mai 2007, après de nombreuses années de planification et de recherche, Sylvie Toupin et Jacques Arseneault ont ouvert à l'île-du-Prince-Édouard la première filature spécialisée dans la transformation de fil de qualité extrait de la fibre de bison en des produits personnalisés tels que des foulards, des châles, des mitaines et des bas.

En décembre 2006, les deux associés ont pressenti la CBDC Central

PEI pour obtenir de l'aide financière, et ils ont obtenu un soutien

à l'investissement dans le cadre du Programme de prêts à la petite

entreprise et du Programme de capital d'appoint. Ces fonds ont permis

à Fibre-Isle International d'acquérir le matériel de haute technologie

nécessaire pour transformer la fibre de bison en fil.

La CBDC Central PEI a également financé un programme de formation afin d'aider l'entreprise à parfaire ses compétences en comptabilité et en tenue de livres. Ainsi, grâce à un projet et à une initiative locaux, une entreprise unique a été lancée afin de contribuer à la diversification et à la stabilité économiques de Mont Carmel.

Genoa Design

Conception Bay (Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador)

Genoa Design illustre à quel point l'association entre l'APECA et les CBDC de la région de l'Atlantique a profité au développement des entreprises locales. Cette entreprise a été développée par Leonard Pecore, un architecte naval qui, en 1995, a commencé à travailler à domicile en tant qu'expert-conseil à Conception Bay South.

En quelques années, Genoa Design a obtenu des contrats de régions

éloignées et a commencé à se tourner vers les marchés étrangers.

Darren Letto, ancien compagnon d'études et copain de camp

d'entraînement de Leonard Pecore, s'est joint à l'équipe pour fournir

l'investissement nécessaire et l'expérience de première ligne des

collectivités à prendre en mains leur propre développement économique. Les CBDC aident les zones rurales de la région de l'Atlantique à fonder, à agrandir et à moderniser des PME en accordant une aide financière sous forme de prêts, de garanties de prêts ou de financement par actions aux entrepreneurs ou aux personnes souhaitant se lancer en affaires. L'APECA gère plus de douze millions de dollars par année par l'intermédiaire du Programme de développement des collectivités afin de financer les coûts d'exploitation des CBDC.

Les CBDC ont consenti 9 000 prêts totalisant 257 millions de dollars, ce qui a engendré des investissements supplémentaires de 262 millions de

dollars au cours des cinq dernières années. Ces contributions leur ont permis de fournir une source de capitaux essentielle au développement des petites entreprises rurales ainsi que des services-conseils et des services de perfectionnement des compétences. L'APECA collabore aussi avec les CBDC dans le cadre du Programme de capital d'appoint en vue de soutenir les citoyens et citoyennes de l'Atlantique. Grâce à ce programme, les jeunes entrepreneurs peuvent obtenir un prêt personnel sans garantie assorti d'un taux d'intérêt et de modalités de remboursement souples pour se lancer en affaires ou agrandir leur entreprise. Certains obtiennent une formation en affaires et des services-conseils.

Une évaluation effectuée en mars 2004 a confirmé la pertinence du Programme de capital d'appoint, du fait qu'il combine les principaux éléments de soutien dont les jeunes entrepreneurs ont besoin sur le plan du financement, de la formation et de l'encadrement.

L'APECA a conçu de nouvelles façons de fournir une source permanente de capitaux aux propriétaires d'entreprises locales. Le Fonds d'investissement du Canada atlantique dans les entreprises locales (FICAE) a été créé en mai 2000 comme facilité de crédit régionale. Les CBDC empruntent au FICAE et réaffectent les prêts aux petites entreprises clientes. Jusqu'à présent, l'APECA a versé 15,6 millions de dollars au FICAE. La valeur de ce fonds s'élève aujourd'hui à plus de 25 millions de dollars en raison de cette contribution et des investissements des CBDC.

En mars 2004, l'Agence a établi un fonds pour stimuler l'intégration et l'utilisation de technologies au sein des petites entreprises des milieux ruraux de la région de l'Atlantique. Le Fonds de développement technologique, un fonds renouvelable communautaire de sept millions de dollars, prévoit l'octroi de prêts non garantis aux PME pour une période maximale de cinq ans.

CBDC : Ces organismes autonomes administrés par des bénévoles fournissent des capitaux d'investissement et du microcrédit aux entreprises des régions rurales, leur offrent des services-conseils et les aident à parfaire leurs compétences, en mettant l'accent sur les petites et moyennes entreprises.

communautaires en vue d'élaborer des plans, de renforcer les capacités et d'investir dans des projets stratégiques à l'appui de ces secteurs.

Afin de soutenir efficacement le développement des collectivités, l'APECA a créé un réseau de bureaux locaux et de bureaux de district, qui offrent 36 points de contact avec les partenaires du développement des collectivités partout dans la région de l'Atlantique. Pour combler les lacunes dans le modèle de développement des collectivités, l'APECA appuie également d'autres organismes voués au développement économique des collectivités, comme les organismes de développement économique régional (ODER), qui sont présents partout dans la région et gérés par les collectivités elles-mêmes.

En partenariat avec les provinces et l'administration locale, l'APECA fournit aux ODER de la région les ressources nécessaires à leur fonctionnement. L'objectif premier des ODER consiste à stimuler le développement économique à l'échelle locale et à encourager les citoyens à participer à la création d'une stratégie de développement locale. Celle-ci peut inclure des éléments aussi variés que les initiatives d'acquisition de compétences et d'apprentissage,

la promotion régionale, l'investissement et le développement du tourisme. Les provinces de l'Atlantique comptent en tout 52 ODER qui prennent part à la planification et à la coordination du développement économique des collectivités; chacun est régi par un conseil d'administration bénévole et dirigé par du personnel professionnel.

Les 52 ODER de la région de l'Atlantique ont le mandat de promouvoir le développement économique local par le développement des collectivités et la planification stratégique.

5.3 Développement des entreprises communautaires

Dans le dossier du développement des entreprises communautaires, l'APECA accomplit son travail en collaboration avec 41 corporations au bénéfice du développement communautaire (CBDC) situées partout dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. Les CBDC représentent un réseau dynamique d'entreprises locales, et elles doivent rendre compte à l'APECA en vertu d'accords de financement.

Programme de capital d'appoint sur cinq ans : près de 3 000 prêts ont été consentis, ce qui représente un investissement total de 34,4 millions de dollars.

Le Programme de développement des collectivités est né de l'un de ces accords de financement. Il prévoit l'octroi de fonds de fonctionnement et de fonds d'immobilisations à 41 CBDC situés dans des collectivités rurales et gérées par des conseils d'administration bénévoles. Ce modèle repose sur le principe selon lequel la prise de décisions à l'échelle locale par des membres de la collectivité amène les

Chapitre 5

Développement des collectivités

5.1 Aperçu

Les collectivités fortes constituent le fondement même de la structure socioéconomique de la région de l'Atlantique.

L'Agence aide les collectivités de la région de l'Atlantique à tirer parti des ressources dont elles ont besoin pour assumer la pleine responsabilité de leur développement économique. Cette approche à l'égard du développement des collectivités repose sur le principe voulant que la meilleure façon d'aborder les problèmes des collectivités, comme le chômage et l'instabilité économique, consiste à adopter un processus ascendant.

Dans cette optique, l'APÉCA a établi des partenariats efficaces avec les collectivités et un réseau d'organismes locaux afin de veiller à ce qu'ils participent à la planification et à la prise de décisions. Tout en mobilisant les collectivités, cette approche concertée amène tous les ordres de gouvernement à travailler de concert. Les intervenants abordent ensemble les défis et les possibilités économiques qui surgissent dans ces collectivités en mettant à contribution les forces, la créativité et les ressources locales.

Le développement des collectivités est considéré comme un moyen important de favoriser la diversification de l'économie dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. L'Agence finance des initiatives qui permettent d'accroître au maximum le rendement du capital investi tout en respectant les priorités des collectivités.

5.2 Ressources pour le développement des collectivités

Les stratégies locales de développement économique cernent des secteurs particuliers qui constituent le fondement d'une croissance durable. Par conséquent, l'Agence travaille de concert avec des partenaires

Nous nous servons également de l'étude de marché dans le cadre de notre analyse de rentabilisation afin d'attirer les investisseurs. Le soutien fourni nous a bien aidés tout au long du parcours.

Jeammy et Bruno Grondin
Grondin Ventilation Inc.

Grondin Ventilation Inc.
Saint-Jacques (Nouveau-Brunswick)

Grondin Ventilation Inc. conçoit, fabrique et installe des appareils de ventilation taillés sur mesure. Lorsque l'équipement standard ne répondait plus aux exigences de l'entreprise, les propriétaires ont décidé de concevoir et de construire leur propre appareil. Entreprises Canada leur a fourni de l'aide pour la réalisation d'une étude de marché en prévision de la commercialisation de leur produit. Le produit qui en résulte est une table de découpage au plasma à commande numérique par ordinateur, et il est tout à fait compétitif sur les marchés.

Entreprises Canada : Service à la clientèle exemplaire

En 2004, Entreprises Canada s'est vu décerner le Prix de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en matière de service public pour avoir amélioré ses résultats au chapitre du service au public. À ces réalisations viennent s'ajouter les résultats d'un sondage national mené auprès de la clientèle en 2006-2007. Ils révèlent que 85 % des clients étaient satisfaits de la qualité de l'information reçue et que 87 % des répondants estimaient que le personnel des centres était allé « au-delà de leurs attentes ». Fait important, 55 % des répondants ont indiqué que le service reçu les a aidés à démarrer leur entreprise.

Remise du Prix de l'ONU en matière de service public à Entreprises Canada en 2004.

l'obtention de capitaux, les études de marché, la gestion des ressources humaines, le commerce international et la protection de la propriété intellectuelle. L'APFCA est associée à Entreprises Canada, service d'information gouvernemental qui offre un guichet unique aux entreprises et aux entrepreneurs en démarrage du pays. Dans les provinces de l'Atlantique, les centres de services sont gérés par l'APFCA et sont situés dans chaque capitale provinciale. Ce réseau est augmenté de centres satellites établis dans des collectivités rurales.

Ces centres offrent des services gratuits, notamment l'accès à des bases de données sur les études de marché, à des plans d'entreprise types et à des guides sur les sources d'information. Les services fournis par Entreprises Canada ont fourni une aide précieuse à des PME telles que Wellness Forever Natural Products et Grondin Ventilation.

Wellness Forever Natural Products Halifax (Nouvelle-Écosse)

Jack Pelley est un bel exemple d'entrepreneur qui a bénéficié de l'aide d'Entreprises Canada. M. Pelley avait un concept d'affaires. Il avait découvert les bienfaits de l'huile de graine de chanvre, surtout pour le traitement du diabète de type 2. Après avoir soumis de l'huile de graine de chanvre à des essais dans une station de recherche fédérale, il l'a fait encapsuler et l'a administrée à un groupe témoin. Voyant que ce projet de recherche-développement donnait systématiquement des résultats satisfaisants, M. Pelley a décidé d'explorer ses options comme entrepreneur. C'est ce qui l'a amené au centre d'Entreprises Canada pour recueillir de l'information sur le démarrage d'une entreprise. Le personnel l'a aiguillé vers les sources d'information pertinentes de son centre de documentation et l'a aidé à obtenir l'information et le nom des personnes-ressources dont il avait besoin pour mettre son entreprise sur pied.

M. Pelley agit maintenant comme propriétaire et exploitant de la société Wellness Forever Natural Products, distributeur du produit Rx.Healthyyme. Outre des bienfaits pour les personnes souffrant du diabète de type 2, ce produit présente divers avantages pour la santé – amélioration de la tension artérielle et des niveaux de cholestérol et accélération du métabolisme. Depuis 2003, le chiffre d'affaires de la société a triplé.

L'intermédiaire de laquelle des particuliers riches peuvent investir dans des débouchés d'affaires locaux intéressants. En finançant des projets stratégiques tels que le Fonds de capital atlantique GrowthWorks, les réseaux d'investisseurs providentiels et les initiatives de microcrédit, l'APECA favorise le développement de marchés financiers dans les provinces de l'Atlantique.

La plus récente évaluation du PDE révèle que, pour chaque dollar investi, la plus récente évaluation du PDE révèle que, pour chaque dollar investi, l'impact sur le produit intérieur brut (PIB) est de 7,50 \$. Le programme engendre aussi des avantages nets pour les contribuables. Pour chaque dollar investi, le rendement net pour le contribuable s'élève à plus de 2 \$.

Ces investissements ont permis à de nombreuses entreprises de mener à bien des projets d'expansion et de modernisation. La société BWS Manufacturing Ltd. en est un bon exemple.

BWS Manufacturing Ltd. Centreville (Nouveau-Brunswick)

BWS fabrique une vaste gamme de carrosseries de remorques et de camions pour les industries des forêts, des mines et de la construction. En 2003, l'APECA a aidé l'entreprise à réaliser un examen diagnostique de ses activités à une époque où elle enregistrerait de lourdes pertes. Cette situation empêchait l'entreprise d'obtenir les capitaux dont elle avait besoin pour apporter les améliorations nécessaires.

Depuis 2003, l'Agence a investi plus de 200 000 \$ dans BWS, ce qui a permis à l'entreprise d'agrandir et de moderniser ses installations ainsi que d'entreprendre des initiatives de formation et de fabrication sans gaspillage.

Par suite de ces investissements, BWS a enregistré une hausse de 85 % de ses revenus depuis 2003 et a renoué avec la rentabilité en 2007. L'apport financier de l'APECA a donc permis à cette importante entreprise rurale de plus de 80 employés de demeurer en exploitation.

4.7 Accès à l'information relative aux affaires

Les citoyens des provinces de l'Atlantique qui souhaitent se lancer en affaires ou agrandir leur entreprise doivent pouvoir compter sur un accès commode à de l'information sur les règlements, les programmes et les ressources du gouvernement. Les questions généralement posées portent sur le démarrage d'une entreprise, l'élaboration de plans d'entreprise,

De concert avec ses partenaires des secteurs public et privé, l'APECA travaille avec la communauté financière à surmonter ces obstacles à la croissance des entreprises et à combler les besoins en financement. Elle cherche à assurer l'existence d'un continuum de financement pour que les entreprises aient accès aux capitaux dont elles ont besoin à toutes les étapes de leur cycle de vie. L'Agence complète le rôle des investisseurs providentiels, des sociétés de capital-risque et des émissions publiques; elle intervient en favorisant la création de mécanismes adéquats de financement par emprunt dans les banques commerciales, les caisses populaires et d'autres établissements de crédit.

L'APECA se sert toujours du Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE) comme outil pour compléter les sources de financement privées. Ce programme offre une aide directe aux PME pour divers projets – démarrage, expansion, marketing, formation, accroissement de la productivité et amélioration de la qualité – lorsque celles-ci n'arrivent pas à obtenir les capitaux nécessaires par les méthodes de financement classiques.

En 2004, l'APECA a approuvé une contribution de dix millions de dollars pour la création du Fonds de capital atlantique GrowthWorks afin de redynamiser le marché du capital-risque dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. Cette société de capital-risque de travailleurs obtiendra des fonds en offrant des parts à des investisseurs locaux qui bénéficieront d'économies d'impôt en vertu des régimes fiscaux fédéraux et provinciaux. Le Fonds investira les capitaux ainsi amassés dans des entreprises prometteuses de la région de l'Atlantique, de manière à maximiser leurs capacités d'innovation et de croissance.

L'APECA s'est également associée à la First Angel Network Association, organisme sans but lucratif créé en 2005 pour combler l'écart au Canada atlantique entre entrepreneurs et capitaux. Ce réseau, qui mise sur la communication, la sensibilisation et le réseautage, représente une nouvelle source de capitaux pour les entrepreneurs qualifiés par

Programme de développement des entreprises 2003-2008

Type de projet	Nbre de projets	Fonds approuvés	Coûts totaux des projets
Démarrage	238	65,8	392,4
Expansion/modernisation	915	147,3	439,3
Total	1 153	213,1	831,7

(en millions de dollars) (en millions de dollars)

Les sommes que l'APÉCA a investies en 2007 dans ACE Memorial aident à financer diverses activités, dont un centre d'incubation d'entreprises étudiantes appelé *Launch Pad* (plateforme de lancement), qui vise à aider les étudiants à fonder des entreprises prospères et à organiser des activités communautaires réussies. Récemment, ACE Memorial a reçu un soutien financier supplémentaire pour offrir des séances de formation dans les domaines de la comptabilité, du marketing et des ressources humaines à un organisme de développement des collectivités de Port Hope Simpson, au Labrador.

La stratégie de l'APÉCA au chapitre du perfectionnement des compétences en affaires a produit d'excellents résultats dans le secteur du tourisme.

Nous sommes très fiers de nos projets communautaires et nous sommes très fiers de nos réalisations, a indiqué la présidente d'ACE Memorial, Mme Heather Comerford. La coupe du monde SIFF a permis à ACE Memorial de montrer son travail sur une tribune internationale, et nous sommes très fiers de notre performance. Aucune autre équipe canadienne ne s'était rendue aussi loin auparavant dans le cadre de cette compétition.

Missions de pratiques exemplaires dans le domaine du tourisme

Depuis 2000, l'APÉCA a dirigé, en collaboration avec l'Association de l'industrie touristique du Nouveau-Brunswick, 68 missions de pratiques exemplaires auxquelles ont participé plus de 557 représentants de l'industrie. Ces missions mettaient l'accent sur des séminaires instructifs et des visites d'exploitations prospères qui offrent des expériences touristiques de haute qualité à l'extérieur des provinces de l'Atlantique. Ces missions visent à offrir aux entreprises touristiques de la région, de même qu'aux fonctionnaires fédéraux, provinciaux et municipaux, la possibilité de profiter du savoir-faire de chefs de file de l'industrie qui offrent des produits, des destinations et des expériences semblables aux leurs. Les participants signalent que les missions leur ont été utiles, en ce sens qu'elles leur ont procuré d'excellentes occasions d'échanger des idées, des stratégies et des préoccupations avec d'autres groupes et d'autres particuliers à diverses étapes du développement touristique.

4.6 Continuum de financement

Dans la région de l'Atlantique, les entreprises n'ont pas accès à toute la gamme d'options de financement qui existent dans les grands centres. Les PME ont souvent de la difficulté à obtenir des prêts en raison de divers facteurs, dont le manque de capitaux propres, l'évaluation du risque par les prêteurs et les déficits de financement qui caractérisent souvent les entreprises en milieu rural.

À Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, l'équipe ACE Memorial a été fondée en 1992. Elle est formée de plus de 70 étudiants de la faculté d'administration des affaires de l'Université Memorial. Devenue l'une des équipes ACE les plus fortes du pays, ACE Memorial a remporté en 2007 une impressionnante deuxième place à la coupe du monde *Students in Free Enterprise* (SIFE) à New York. En tout, plus de 1 500 équipes issues de 43 pays participaient à cette compétition.

Advancing Canadian Entrepreneurship (ACE) Inc., organisme national de formation et de sensibilisation à l'entrepreneuriat, stimule l'esprit d'entreprise au Canada en mettant sur pied des équipes d'étudiants de l'université et du collège et en les amenant à mettre en pratique et à enseigner les principes et les valeurs de l'entrepreneuriat.

ACE Memorial

St. John's (Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador)

La SIB est exécutée par les corporations au bénéfice du développement communautaire (CBDC) et le Centre de développement et d'éducation en entrepreneuriat, avec le soutien financier de l'APECA, de la SECB et de Service Canada.

Depuis 2004, 256 prêts ont été consentis à des jeunes entrepreneurs, qui ont créé au total 342 emplois (équivalents temps plein) un peu partout dans la province. Sur les 1,03 million de dollars qui ont été investis jusqu'ici sous forme de prêts, il a fallu radier des créances d'environ 42 000 \$ (4,1 % du total), ce qui correspond à un taux d'échec très faible, compte tenu du risque.

L'initiative Students in Business (SIB) a débuté en 2004 grâce à l'aide financière de l'APECA, de la Société d'expansion du Cap-Breton (SECB) et du ministère du Développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse. L'objectif consiste à éveiller l'intérêt des jeunes de la Nouvelle-Écosse pour l'entrepreneuriat et à développer leurs compétences dans ce domaine. Le programme prévoit des prêts d'un maximum de 5 000 \$ pour chaque entreprise créée par des jeunes de 15 à 35 ans qui sont actuellement inscrits à un établissement d'enseignement reconnu ou qui comptent y retourner.

Students in Business Nouvelle-Écosse

Communities Inc., Resources West Inc., la Société de développement de la Baie acadienne et la PEI Business Development Corporation. Plus de 500 entreprises créatives ont été fondées par des jeunes depuis 2003.

Encourager les jeunes entrepreneurs de la région de l'Atlantique

Pour permettre à un nombre accru de jeunes des provinces de l'Atlantique de se lancer en affaires et d'agrandir leur entreprise, l'APECA se concentre sur des activités d'apprentissage pratique, notamment des cours et des ateliers d'entrepreneurs, des concours d'élaboration de plans d'entreprise, des programmes de création d'entreprises estivales et des camps d'entrepreneurs.

L'IJE de l'APECA vise à élargir et à améliorer la gamme de services de formation, d'information et de soutien offerts dans le domaine de l'entrepreneurs aux jeunes de moins de 35 ans des provinces de l'Atlantique. Elle accorde un soutien financier à des organismes sans but lucratif et à des organismes non commerciaux pour leur permettre d'élaborer des projets et des programmes qui aident les jeunes à se lancer en affaires et à bâtir leur entreprise.

Les résultats d'un sondage mené en 2004 sont positifs. Un grand nombre de jeunes ont mis sur pied une entreprise après avoir participé à une activité financée dans le cadre de l'IJE. Les répondants disent :

- être très satisfaits des activités proposées;
- avoir amélioré la gestion financière de leur entreprise;
- être mieux placés pour assurer la survie de leur entreprise;
- avoir accéléré la croissance de leur entreprise.

Les exemples qui suivent illustrent la contribution de l'APECA au perfectionnement des jeunes entrepreneurs.

Programme Jeunes Millionnaires Ile-du-Prince-Édouard

Le programme Jeunes Millionnaires, qui produit des résultats positifs depuis 1992, accorde des fonds de démarrage à des jeunes de 8 à 16 ans de l'Ile-du-Prince-Édouard pour leur permettre de fonder leur propre entreprise. Le programme vise à éveiller l'esprit d'entrepreneurs chez les jeunes de la province et à leur faire prendre conscience des possibilités d'affaires qui peuvent exister dans leur propre collectivité. Les aspirants entrepreneurs assistent à divers ateliers pour apprendre les rudiments de l'exploitation d'une entreprise.

Le programme Jeunes Millionnaires est financé par l'APECA, le gouvernement provincial et la Central Development Corporation. Ce dernier organisme administre le programme en collaboration avec Active

Ce programme offre à nos jeunes l'occasion de prendre conscience des débouchés d'affaires qui existent à l'île, a expliqué M. Norman Gallant, président de la Central Development Corporation. Quel moyen stimulant pour eux de découvrir ce que l'avenir pourrait leur réserver!

Le nombre d'entrepreneures locales qui ont été primées pour leurs compétences exceptionnelles témoigne bien de l'efficacité de ce réseau que finance l'APÉCA. En 2005, Andrea Fuenekes, présidente de la société Remsoft, de Frederickton, au Nouveau-Brunswick, a reçu le prix RBC de l'Entrepreneure canadienne de l'année pour son travail d'innovation. Lily Durepos et son associé d'Alliance-Assurance, à Grand-Sault, au Nouveau-Brunswick, se sont vu décerner le prix Ernst and Young de l'Entrepreneur de l'année (catégorie des services) en 2006 pour la région de l'Atlantique.

les possibilités de financement; à cerner des moyens de renforcer leur capacité d'innovation et d'exportation; et à saisir des possibilités de formation, de perfectionnement professionnel et de réseautage.

à obtenir des conseils d'experts, de l'information, des services d'encadrement et du soutien; à obtenir de l'information sur les possibilités de financement; à cerner des moyens de renforcer leur capacité d'innovation et d'exportation; et à saisir des possibilités de formation, de perfectionnement professionnel et de réseautage.

Initiative Femmes en affaires – Association des CBDC du Nouveau-Brunswick

ou d'une absence de garantie.

admissibles en raison d'un manque de capitaux propres

des prêts auxquels elles n'auraient normalement pas été

- Depuis 2003, plus de 550 entrepreneures ont accédé à 3 700 femmes y ont participé en 2006-2007.

conférences et des activités de réseautage. Plus de

les entrepreneures, par exemple des ateliers, des

perfectionnement des compétences en affaires pour

- L'Agence a financé diverses activités de

à plus de 1 800 femmes.

ont offert quelque 4 200 séances de consultation

entrepreneures de la région. En 2006-2007 seulement, ces organismes

à la planification, des services-conseils et un encadrement aux

provinces de l'Atlantique afin qu'ils puissent fournir une aide

- L'APÉCA a aidé cinq organismes de soutien aux entreprises des

par une gamme d'activités que l'Agence a menées au cours des cinq

Le travail de l'APÉCA visant à appuyer les femmes en affaires se traduit

Ces femmes propriétaires d'entreprises qui participent à la mission Femmes exportatrices et Exportateurs du Canada [MEC] sont la fine fleur des nouveaux entrepreneurs de la région de l'Atlantique, a déclaré Ann Janega, vice-présidente de la division de la Nouvelle-Écosse des MEC. Leurs sociétés offrent une incroyable possibilité de croissance, et les MEC sont déterminés à les aider à se tailler une place parmi les principaux fabricants et exportateurs du pays.

Le Forum des entrepreneurs aide les entrepreneurs à parfaire leurs compétences en gestion. De concert avec le Conseil national de recherches du Canada et les gouvernements de la Nouvelle-Écosse, de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador et de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, l'APPECA cofinance cette initiative qui aide les entreprises du savoir à accéder aux conseils d'un vaste réseau bénévole de gens d'affaires.

Depuis 2003, plus de 900 conseillers bénévoles ont passé au-delà de 6 200 heures à aider plus de 650 entrepreneurs à se lancer en affaires ou à agrandir leur entreprise. Selon le dernier sondage réalisé auprès des clients, 92 % des répondants estiment qu'ils n'auraient pas pu recevoir des conseils de la même qualité ailleurs, et 88 % ont jugé les séances de consultation utiles ou très utiles.

Accroître la compétitivité des femmes propriétaires d'entreprise

L'Agence investit dans des programmes taillés sur mesure



pour accroître la compétitivité des femmes de la région de l'Atlantique qui sont propriétaires d'entreprise. Lancée en 2002, l'IFA prévoit l'octroi de fonds à des organismes de soutien aux entreprises pour aider les entrepreneures à prendre de l'expansion. Plusieurs services sont offerts par l'intermédiaire de cette initiative : financement, formation, encouragements pour l'exploration des marchés étrangers et création de moyens innovateurs de faire des affaires.

En 2004, une évaluation de l'IFA a révélé que les entrepreneures appuyaient fortement les projets et les services financés par l'initiative. En fait, 89 % des répondantes ont indiqué accorder une grande valeur aux services-conseils en affaires qui sont offerts. Le taux de satisfaction global à l'égard de l'IFA était de 84 %. Le professionnalisme du personnel, l'exactitude de l'information, l'ampleur de la couverture géographique et l'accès à l'évaluation détaillée des besoins figuraient parmi les caractéristiques positives du programme indiquées par les clientes de l'IFA.

J'ai consulté le Forum des entrepreneurs, car ma petite entreprise éprouvait plusieurs difficultés, explique M. Steve Howatt, président et fondateur d'Atlantic AgriTech Inc., une entreprise de recherche agricole prospère établie à New Glasgow, à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. La séance que j'ai suivie était l'une des activités les plus utiles et les plus enrichissantes auxquelles j'ai participé pour apprendre à mieux gérer et exploiter mon entreprise. J'y ai reçu une mine de renseignements, et je compte exécuter beaucoup de suggestions au cours des semaines et des mois à venir.

- Dans les cinq dernières années, l'Agence a consacré près de

deux millions de dollars à des activités de sensibilisation et de promotion pour mieux faire connaître les provinces de l'Atlantique aux investisseurs américains et européens. La mise sur pied du Comité de coordination de l'investissement de la région de l'Atlantique a permis de mettre en commun les ressources des partenaires fédéraux et provinciaux afin de créer une masse critique pour la réalisation d'activités de marketing et de promotion des investissements.

De 2003 à 2006, le nombre de projets d'IED a augmenté de 10 % au Canada, et les investissements étaient plus importants dans le secteur des services que dans celui

de la fabrication. Outre les États-Unis, qui demeurent une bonne source d'IED pour le Canada, l'Europe et l'Asie sont devenues des investisseurs importants. La région de l'Atlantique commence à enregistrer des gains dans des domaines stratégiques tels que l'impartition des procédés opérationnels, les technologies de l'information et les services financiers.

Selon une étude internationale approfondie de KPMG, les provinces de l'Atlantique demeurent la région la plus attrayante pour les investisseurs sur le plan des coûts. L'Agence a veillé à ce que la région soit incluse dans le rapport.

4.5 Entrepreneurship et perfectionnement des compétences en affaires

Pour favoriser la croissance des entreprises de la région de l'Atlantique, l'APECA investit dans des activités qui contribuent à créer un climat d'entrepreneurs où le travail indépendant est considéré comme une option de carrière viable et où le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires fait partie de la culture d'entreprise. Cette stratégie vise à accroître le nombre d'entrepreneurs et, tout aussi important, à faire en sorte que les propriétaires de PME soient bien outillés pour assurer la survie et l'expansion de leur entreprise.

Depuis sa création, l'APECA cherche à accroître le nombre d'entrepreneurs dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. Pour ce faire, elle accorde des contributions à des organismes non commerciaux, tels que des associations d'entreprises, des associations de développement économique et des établissements d'enseignement, qui, à leur tour, entreprennent des activités destinées à favoriser l'entrepreneurs et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires. Les principales mesures mises en place à cette fin sont l'Initiative pour jeunes entrepreneurs (IJE) et l'Initiative Femmes en affaires (IFA).

Dans le cadre du Programme de développement des entreprises, l'Agence a investi 44,2 millions de dollars dans des projets d'entrepreneurs et de perfectionnement des compétences en affaires (d'avril 2002 à octobre 2007).

Grâce à l'aide du FIA, Atlantic Turbines répond à la demande croissante de sa clientèle, procure un emploi à plus de 300 travailleurs et tire 80 % de ses revenus de l'exportation.

4.4 Investissements étrangers dans les provinces de l'Atlantique

Les investissements étrangers directs (IED) représentent un autre domaine de concurrence qui engendre des retombées économiques majeures pour la région de l'Atlantique. Ils jouent un rôle important en stimulant le développement économique, en favorisant la création de grappes commerciales et en constituant la masse critique nécessaire pour permettre aux entreprises de soutenir la concurrence à l'échelle mondiale. De 2004 à 2006, 33,6 % de toutes les sommes investies dans les immobilisations et l'équipement au Canada atlantique, soit 27 milliards de dollars, étaient attribuables à des sociétés d'investissement étrangères.

La stratégie d'investissement de l'APECA vise à faire connaître la région à l'étranger comme lieu d'affaires attrayant pour les investisseurs ainsi qu'à créer des possibilités d'investissement étranger dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. La stratégie comporte quatre grands volets :

1. **Recherche sur les investissements** – Détermination et analyse des grands facteurs qui influent sur le choix des lieux d'investissement par les sociétés étrangères et analyse des tendances et des développements dans les sociétés d'investissement à l'échelle mondiale. Participation à des études nationales sur l'investissement étranger.
2. **Information commerciale et diffusion de l'information** – Suivi des tendances et des développements dans le domaine de l'investissement étranger et diffusion de cette information par des bulletins sur l'investissement et des séances de formation.
3. **Sensibilisation et promotion** – Création d'outils tels que des campagnes de marketing et des activités de diffusion d'information.
4. **Partenariats en investissement** – Coordination d'initiatives fédérales-provinciales.

Voici les principales activités découlant de cette stratégie d'investissement :

- L'APECA a financé des recherches pour remédier au manque de données sur les investissements étrangers et leur impact sur les provinces de l'Atlantique. Citons à titre d'exemple la recherche menée par le Conseil économique des provinces de l'Atlantique, intitulée *Le point sur les investissements étrangers au Canada atlantique* (2005).

Équipe Canada Atlantique a pu organiser des missions avec plus de 230 PME de l'Atlantique de 2003 à 2007. Depuis 1999, année de leur création, ces missions ont permis à environ 490 entreprises des provinces de l'Atlantique de réaliser des ventes immédiates de plus de 41 millions de dollars.

Selon les données de Statistique Canada, la valeur des exportations des PME clientes de l'APÉCA est passée de 537 millions de dollars en 2000 à 959 millions de dollars en 2005. Cela représente une croissance moyenne des exportations de 12,3 % par année. Les exportations des entreprises comparables ont chuté de 1,1 milliard de dollars à 811 millions de dollars pendant cette période, ce qui équivaut à une baisse moyenne de 5,9 % par année. L'APÉCA joue un rôle important en ce qui concerne les exportations des PME, puisque ses clients ont effectué 54 % des exportations de toutes les PME du Canada atlantique en 2005.

Atlantic Turbines International Inc.

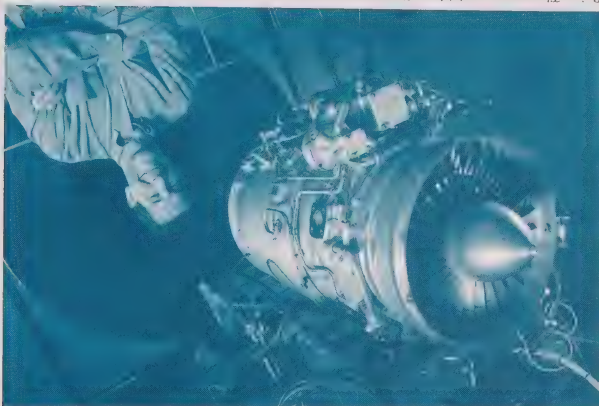
Summerside (Ile-du-Prince-Édouard)

La société Atlantic Turbines International Inc. effectue l'entretien, la réparation et la révision de moteurs à turbopropulsion, de turbosoufflantes et de composants de moteur pour l'industrie aéronautique et l'industrie aérospatiale. Fondée en 1992, l'entreprise s'est d'abord concentrée sur les moteurs à turbopropulsion de la série PW100 de Pratt & Whitney. Elle a ensuite pris de l'expansion en acquérant sa première licence de

réparation et de révision d'un moteur à réaction de 3 000 lbf, le JT15D de Pratt & Whitney.

En 2002, Atlantic Turbines a entrepris, avec le soutien du Fonds d'innovation de l'Atlantique (FIA), une initiative de recherche-développement appelée *Centre of Repair Excellence* (centre

Brian Thompson, président d'Atlantic Turbines International Inc.



d'excellence en réparation), qui vise à faire d'elle un chef de file mondial de l'entretien et de la réparation des turbines à gaz. L'entreprise a continué de développer ses exportations et a participé à une mission commerciale et technologique de l'APÉCA au Royaume-Uni en 2004 ainsi qu'au Salon de l'aéronautique de Paris en 2005 et en 2007.

d'exportation sectorielles, séances de sensibilisation au commerce et de perfectionnement des compétences en affaires, stages en exportation et développement du tourisme.

Les missions de commerce et d'investissement d'Équipe Canada Atlantique (ECA) ont permis à quelque

531 entreprises de rencontrer au-delà de 3 665 acheteurs, agents et propriétaires d'entreprise aux États-Unis. Par suite de ces rencontres, les entreprises participantes ont réalisé des ventes immédiates de plus de 45 millions de dollars. Les missions mettent l'accent sur les marchés du littoral atlantique des États-Unis. D'ordinaire, jusqu'à 40 entreprises exportatrices représentant une gamme variée de secteurs y prennent part. De 2003 à 2008 (du 1^{er} avril 2003 au 31 mars 2008), l'APECA a dirigé sept missions commerciales qui ont engendré des ventes à l'exportation immédiates de plus de 14,32 millions de dollars.

L'Entente sur la promotion du commerce extérieur est le fruit d'un partenariat entre le gouvernement fédéral (l'APECA, Industrie Canada et Affaires étrangères et Commerce international Canada) et les gouvernements des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique. Elle vise tout un éventail d'activités de développement du commerce. De 2003 à 2008, les signataires ont investi plus de 4,6 millions de dollars dans quelque 500 entreprises. Un récent sondage mené auprès des clients a révélé ce qui suit :

- 27 % de ces entreprises ont commencé à exporter;
- 40 % ont accru le volume de leurs exportations sur des marchés existants;
- 18 % ont trouvé de nouveaux marchés pour élargir leur bassin de clients à l'étranger.

Le Programme de développement des entreprises fournit un soutien aux PME, notamment pour des plans et des activités de marketing. De 2003 à 2008, l'APECA a investi plus de 99 millions de dollars dans des PME pour les aider à saisir des débouchés à l'étranger. Elle a de plus aidé 53 entreprises à exporter pour la première fois.

Depuis 2003, plus de 4 000 entreprises ont reçu de l'aide pour se préparer à devenir des exportateurs. La préparation à l'exportation représente la première étape d'un continuum qui aboutit à la réalisation de ventes à l'étranger. Une fois qu'elles sont prêtes à exporter, les entreprises sont bien placées pour prendre de l'expansion en perçant des marchés étrangers. Grâce au travail de promotion et de préparation de l'Agence,

été élaborées.

Depuis le début du Partenariat pour le commerce et l'investissement au Canada atlantique en 2002, 25 stratégies d'exportation sectorielles ont

fédéraux, notamment les délégations canadiennes à l'étranger. De plus, elle participe à l'organisation de missions commerciales sur des marchés choisis des États-Unis, de l'Europe et de l'Asie. Parmi les secteurs d'activité cibles, il faut mentionner l'aquaculture et les fruits de mer en Europe et en Chine, l'aérospatiale et la défense en Europe et les partenariats en technologie et en capital-risque aux États-Unis.

Le quatrième volet de la stratégie de l'APECA touche aux politiques, à la défense des intérêts et à la coordination. Dans son travail de défense des intérêts, l'APECA veille à ce que les intérêts économiques de la région de l'Atlantique se reflètent dans les politiques et les programmes commerciaux du Canada.

La société LuminiUltra Technologies Ltd. est une entreprise néo-brunswickoise dont le développement a bénéficié de l'accès aux programmes de l'APECA en matière de commerce et d'investissement.

LuminiUltra Technologies Ltd. Fredericton (Nouveau-Brunswick)

En participant au Programme de partenariat sur l'exportation en 2006, la société LuminiUltra a pu faire d'importantes percées sur le marché américain. L'entreprise se spécialise dans les technologies de surveillance biologique qui détectent les microorganismes dans l'eau et en mesurent la concentration. La surveillance biologique de l'eau joue un rôle essentiel dans la protection de la santé publique et de l'environnement. Le Programme de partenariat sur l'exportation, initiative découlant du Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique, vise à aider les PME à acquérir les compétences nécessaires pour devenir des exportateurs avisés et pour se tailler une place sur des marchés étrangers stratégiques.

En juillet 2007, l'entreprise a reçu une commande de l'un des géants américains de l'alimentation en eau et de l'épuration des eaux usées – résultat direct d'une rencontre organisée lors d'une mission commerciale de l'APECA en mai 2007.

Principales réalisations de 2003 à 2008

Le Partenariat pour le commerce et l'investissement au Canada atlantique, dont la création a été annoncée en mai 2002, a financé de nombreuses activités : missions d'Équipe Canada Atlantique, élaboration de stratégies

Le Programme de partenariat sur l'exportation et, surtout, l'expérience que nous avons acquise lors de la mission commerciale à Boston nous ont été extrêmement utiles, en ce sens qu'ils nous ont permis de saisir des débouchés en Nouvelle-Angleterre. Je dois dire que les ressources du gouvernement fédéral qui nous ont été accordées par l'intermédiaire du consulat canadien et de l'APECA n'étaient rien de moins que fantastiques!

Phil Whalen
Propriétaire, LuminiUltra

4.3 Commerce et investissement

Commerce

L'APECA cherche à augmenter la capacité d'exportation et le chiffre d'affaires des petites et moyennes entreprises (PME) de l'Atlantique. Elle aide les aspirants exportateurs à se préparer à pincer les marchés étrangers et offre aux exportateurs actuels le soutien dont ils ont besoin pour maintenir et accroître leur capacité d'exportation. Pour ce faire, l'APECA a recours à une gamme variée de programmes, d'activités et de partenariats qui couvrent tout le continuum des exportations, à commencer par la préparation à l'exportation.

Pour améliorer le rendement à l'exportation des PME de la région, l'APECA a adopté une stratégie à quatre volets. Le premier volet, la sensibilisation, présente l'exportation comme stratégie de croissance pour les PME. Il a pour but d'aider les entreprises du Canada atlantique à se familiariser avec les enjeux et les débouchés liés au commerce ainsi que de faire connaître leurs capacités aux clients des marchés étrangers. L'Agence travaille avec Affaires étrangères et Commerce international Canada, les quatre gouvernements provinciaux de l'Atlantique et les principaux intervenants de l'industrie afin de faire ce travail de sensibilisation et d'appuyer des initiatives régionales telles que les séances de sensibilisation aux marchés d'Équipe Canada Atlantique.

Le second volet de la stratégie de développement du commerce de l'APECA porte sur la formation au commerce et le perfectionnement des compétences des PME. L'Agence finance des activités de formation et d'encadrement adaptées aux besoins particuliers des exportateurs actuels et éventuels. Ces activités ont aussi pour effet de créer dans le secteur privé un réseau d'experts-conseils en commerce qualifiés qui peuvent travailler avec les PME de la région.

De 2003 à 2008, l'Agence a financé plus de 660 projets de développement des exportations pour venir en aide à des PME de l'Atlantique. Elle l'a fait dans le cadre d'initiatives telles que le Programme de partenariat sur l'exportation, au Nouveau-Brunswick. Ce programme a permis à plus de 50 entreprises de la province d'obtenir des services d'encadrement, de la formation et de l'expérience pratique sur les marchés.

Le troisième volet de la stratégie, le renforcement des capacités, aide les entreprises à mettre au point de nouveaux produits et à accroître leur part du marché à l'étranger. L'Agence entreprend des recherches et des analyses du commerce en collaboration avec différents intervenants

Remédier aux lacunes sur le plan des compétences en innovation

Afin de combler les lacunes au chapitre des compétences, l'APÉCA aide les PME à acquérir les compétences techniques et les compétences en gestion dont elles ont besoin pour instaurer des mesures d'amélioration de la productivité et gérer des projets d'innovation. L'IDCI, introduite en 2000, a été conçue à cette fin. L'évaluation de l'IDCI réalisée en 2005 révélait que le programme avait contribué à accroître les compétences des PME de la région.

Pour faire fond sur cette réalisation et pour répondre à la forte demande d'aide à l'innovation, l'Agence a lancé la Mesure visant la productivité et les compétences en affaires en 2006. Cette mesure, qui élargit la portée de l'IDCI, vise non seulement l'acquisition de compétences techniques, mais aussi le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires et le recrutement de gestionnaires qualifiés. Au cours de la première année, l'APÉCA a investi au-delà de six millions de dollars dans plus de 165 projets.

Green Imaging Technologies Inc. Fredriction (Nouveau-Brunswick)

Les investissements de l'APÉCA en matière de productivité et de compétences en affaires ont permis à des entreprises comme Green Imaging Technologies Inc. (GIT), de Fredriction, au Nouveau-Brunswick, de se préparer à attirer des investissements afin d'accumuler les capitaux nécessaires à la commercialisation d'une technologie ultramoderne d'imagerie par résonance magnétique pour l'industrie pétrolière.

Cette technologie permettra aux sociétés pétrolières d'analyser plus rapidement et à moindre coût des carottes prélevées dans des réservoirs. Elles disposeront ainsi de données plus nombreuses et plus fiables, ce qui réduira l'incertitude associée aux plans de forage.

Depuis le lancement du produit en septembre 2007 au symposium international de la Society of Core Analysts, GIT a reçu un certain nombre de demandes de propositions de sociétés pétrolières disséminées un peu partout dans le monde. De plus, l'entreprise a entamé des pourparlers avec le plus grand fabricant d'équipement d'analyse de carottes au monde pour qu'il intègre la nouvelle technologie à son équipement.

- De 2003 à 2006, l'APÉCA a contribué pour près de 30 millions de dollars à 450 projets dans le cadre de l'IDCI afin de :
- renforcer les capacités d'innovation et de gestion technologique des PME;
 - accroître l'expertise technique de la région et élargir le bassin de gestionnaires qui ont l'expérience de la gestion des technologies;
 - retenir dans la région un nombre accru de diplômés qualifiés en sciences et en technologies et les amener à s'associer à des PME locales.

BioVectra Inc.

(anciennement appelée *Diagnostic Chemicals Limited*)
Charlottetown (Île-du-Prince-Édouard)

À ses débuts en 1970, BioVectra Inc. était une entreprise à domicile fabriquant de petites quantités d'un produit chimique spécialisé appelé *teinture d'INT*. Depuis, elle a connu une forte croissance, aussi bien du point de vue de l'effectif que de celui de la gamme de produits. L'entreprise fondée par Regis Duffy est en effet devenue l'un des principaux concepteurs et fabricants mondiaux de réactifs de grande valeur et de troussees d'analyse pour les médecins, les laboratoires et les hôpitaux de l'Amérique du Nord. Elle compte plus de 200 employés et fabrique au moins 200 produits. Son chiffre d'affaires pour l'année se terminant le 31 août 2007 dépassait les 36 millions de dollars.

Considérée comme un client modèle par l'APÉCA, la société BioVectra a tiré parti de plusieurs programmes d'aide. L'Agence a en effet contribué pour près de huit millions de dollars à des projets dont les coûts totaux dépassaient 26 millions de dollars, et BioVectra s'est acquittée de ses obligations de remboursement et de création d'emplois.

En décembre 2007, la division diagnostique de BioVectra a vendu la totalité de ses actifs à la société Genzyme Corporation et Genzyme Diagnostics PEI Inc. Cette grande société de biotechnologie cherche vivement à consolider sa présence au sein de la grappe croissante des biosciences de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard.

BioVectra Inc. continue de renforcer ses capacités tout en explorant de nouveaux secteurs stratégiques de développement commercial. Par exemple, son projet de pégylation de biomolécules, l'une des initiatives pour lesquelles elle a bénéficié du FIA, est à 90 % terminé, et, déjà, l'entreprise a réussi à mettre au point et à fabriquer des produits qui présentent un fort potentiel de vente.

Grâce aux investissements de l'APÉCA, BioVectra Inc. est désormais mieux placée pour servir l'industrie biopharmaceutique sur les marchés mondiaux, a déclaré M. Regis Duffy, fondateur et président de l'entreprise. La compagnie a renforcé ses capacités de fabrication et a obtenu le soutien nécessaire pour mettre au point de nouveaux produits pharmaceutiques, ce qui lui a permis de répondre à la demande de ses clients actuels et nouveaux.

ITIS repose sur des technologies innovatrices et a investi massivement dans la recherche-développement. Elle s'est associée à l'Université Dalhousie pour réaliser ses travaux, et, en 2007, elle a entrepris un projet de recherche évalué à plus de deux millions de dollars pour apporter des améliorations à l'une de ses technologies, GenieKnows.com. Ce projet, qui a reçu l'aide du FIA, améliorera l'interface créée pour les utilisateurs en leur offrant plus d'options personnalisées. L'APFCA a également aidé ITIS à accroître sa productivité et à renforcer sa capacité de marketing par divers projets financés dans le cadre du PDE et de l'Initiative de développement des compétences en innovation (IDCI).

Baader-Canpolar Inc.

St. John's (Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador)

Constituée en 1999, Baader-Canpolar Inc. (BCI) est le fruit d'une

coentreprise de Canpolar East et de Baader Canada Inc. qui se spécialise dans les systèmes d'inspection des aliments.

Le système d'inspection visuelle de l'entreprise, qui intègre une technologie brevetée, détecte une vaste gamme de défauts dans les filets de poisson et la volaille.

Pour répondre à la demande de l'industrie, qui exige des niveaux élevés de détection de défauts dans les aliments, BCI a apporté des améliorations techniques à son système d'inspection de base en perfectionnant ses techniques d'imagerie et d'analyse logicielle et en ajoutant une fonctionnalité radiographique. En 2004, l'entreprise a réussi à obtenir le soutien du FIA (2,5 millions de dollars) pour la mise au point et l'assemblage de systèmes d'inspection alimentaire ultraperfectionnés. La société

travaille en partenariat avec Intelligent System Solutions, entreprise indépendante de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador qui se spécialise dans la recherche sur les systèmes intelligents.

Avec l'aide de l'APFCA, BCI a réussi à faire le saut de la recherche-développement à la commercialisation. L'entreprise a officiellement lancé sa technologie d'inspection de la volaille au salon international de la volaille qui s'est tenu aux États-Unis en février 2007.

Le moment est propice pour l'adoption de cette technologie, a déclaré M. Paul Hearn, directeur général de Baader-Canpolar Inc. Le logiciel en est la pièce maîtresse. Avec l'aide du Fonds d'innovation de l'Atlantique, nous avons pu automatiser nos procédés tout en garantissant un niveau de qualité élevé pour l'inspection de la salubrité des produits alimentaires.

Cathexis Innovations Inc.

St. John's (Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador)

Cathexis est une entreprise privée qui a réussi la difficile transition entre la recherche-développement et les marchés. Elle témoigne bien du soutien que peut fournir l'APECA pour aider les entreprises à faire cette transition.

L'entreprise est le fabricant d'un produit appelé *ID Blue*, le tout premier lecteur d'étiquettes d'identification par radiofréquences exploitable par Bluetooth. Les dispositifs d'identification par radiofréquences accroissent l'efficacité de la collecte et de l'analyse des données, et leurs applications sont variées, depuis la gestion des stocks jusqu'au contrôle de sécurité.

Nous sommes l'une des six entreprises au monde qui ont conclu un partenariat avec la société [Microsoft] pour le matériel d'identification par radiofréquences, et nous sommes la seule à posséder un lecteur sans fil. Nous en sommes très fiers, et ce produit nous assure une grande visibilité sur les marchés.

Steve Taylor
PDG, Cathexis Innovation Inc.

L'APECA a d'abord fourni à Cathexis une aide à la gestion et au marketing dans le cadre du PDE. Puis, en janvier 2008, l'entreprise s'est vu accorder 2,69 millions de dollars du FIA pour perfectionner son produit *ID Blue*. Ce projet, d'une valeur totale de 5,69 millions de dollars, consiste en des travaux de recherche-développement ayant trait à la miniaturisation, à la gestion de la consommation et aux communications avancées. L'entreprise souhaite aussi mettre au point des applications logicielles pour l'identification par radiofréquences. Cathexis travaillera de concert avec des partenaires étrangers, dont la société Microsoft et le Centre d'excellence en recherche appliquée et en formation des Émirats arabes unis. L'entreprise a également obtenu d'importants capitaux privés de 2,5 millions de dollars qui l'aideront à financer ses stratégies de croissance et de commercialisation.

IT Interactive Services Inc. Halifax (Nouvelle-Écosse)

La société IT Interactive Services Inc. (ITIS) est un bel exemple d'entreprise innovatrice dans le domaine des services Internet. Fondée par trois associés qui en étaient également les exploitants, cette entreprise de 20 employés enregistre un chiffre d'affaires de six millions de dollars. Aujourd'hui, elle compte un effectif de 33 travailleurs et prévoit des ventes de 27 millions de dollars. ITIS est un chef de file de la conception et de la prestation de services de marketing axés sur le rendement pour Internet. Ses marques de commerce, notamment GenieKnows.com, GenieKnows.co.uk et GenieKnowsGames.com, sont aujourd'hui connues et respectées dans le monde entier, offrant aux utilisateurs des résultats de recherche ciblés par catégories.

secteur privé peut mener à de plus grandes possibilités de commercialisation. Le FIA a donc été conçu pour accélérer la recherche-développement dans les universités, pour stimuler la collaboration interuniversitaire et pour faciliter la création de partenariats qui allient recherche universitaire et développement des entreprises. En sensibilisant les entreprises aux avantages qu'elles peuvent tirer des activités d'innovation et en faisant la promotion de liens plus étroits entre les principaux intervenants du domaine de l'innovation, l'APECA a contribué à consolider le réseau d'innovation de la région, ce qui s'est traduit par des partenariats entre les chercheurs universitaires et les entreprises, par une intensification des travaux de recherche-développement et par la commercialisation des résultats de la recherche.

Le réseau Springboard figure au nombre de ces partenariats. Pour aider les universités de la région à cerner les activités commerciales

prometteuses et à en tirer parti, l'APECA s'est associée à quatorze universités et à d'autres intervenants pour créer et maintenir un réseau de transfert technologique qui appuie la commercialisation des produits de la recherche universitaire réalisée dans la région de l'Atlantique. Dans un rapport de 2007 intitulé *Enseignement supérieur et régions*, l'OCDE souligne le travail de l'APECA et fait mention de Springboard, qu'elle considère comme un réseau unique en son genre pour la promotion de la recherche et la commercialisation. L'OCDE précise que le réseau Springboard mobilise le savoir dans l'intérêt du développement économique, en incluant les petites universités qui n'ont pas les ressources voulues pour soutenir une fonction de commercialisation. Selon le rapport, le FIA est devenu un catalyseur qui favorise la création de partenariats entre les entreprises et le milieu de la recherche, notamment les établissements d'enseignement supérieur.

Les paragraphes qui suivent présentent plusieurs exemples de clients de l'APECA qui contribuent à renforcer les réseaux d'innovation de la région de l'Atlantique. Bon nombre de ces entreprises ont tiré parti de plus d'un programme de l'Agence pour divers aspects de l'innovation.

Les membres de Springboard estiment que cette façon de procéder ouvre la voie à des liens de collaboration et à des partenariats à grande échelle avec l'industrie, les sociétés de capital-risque et des organismes publics tels que le Conseil national de recherches du Canada, a déclaré M. Axel Meisen, (ancien) recteur de l'Université Memorial et (ancien) président de l'Association des universités de l'Atlantique. Springboard nous assure aussi une place à la table pour l'élaboration de politiques nationales en matière d'innovation et de commercialisation des technologies. En mettant en commun les ressources des universités de la région de l'Atlantique, nous obtenons la masse critique essentielle à la réussite.

• l'APÉCA a reçu 627 propositions de promoteurs qui sollicitaient 1,96 milliard de dollars pour des projets évalués à 3,7 milliards de dollars;

• elle a approuvé 192 projets évalués à 1,2 milliard de dollars et y a contribué pour 521 millions de dollars du FIA;

• le pourcentage de projets institutionnels (universités et collèges) entrepris avec un partenaire du secteur privé a augmenté de façon marquée, passant de 67 % au cours de la première série à 92 % au cours de la cinquième série.

De toute évidence, le secteur privé a un rôle de premier plan à jouer dans la commercialisation des technologies. De façon générale, la proportion des projets d'innovation dirigés par des entreprises du secteur privé a augmenté sensiblement au fil des séries de financement du FIA (il est à remarquer que la première série a eu lieu avant la période quinquennale visée) :

- 36 % de la première série en 2002;
- 46 % de la deuxième série en 2003;
- 52 % de la troisième série en 2006;
- 66 % de la quatrième série en 2007;
- 55 % de la cinquième série en 2008.

Les sommes investies dans ces projets commerciaux amènent des partenaires et des investisseurs du secteur privé à investir à leur tour des sommes considérables dans la commercialisation des technologies, un objectif clé du FIA.

Le site Web de l'APÉCA renferme une liste complète des projets approuvés jusqu'à présent dans le cadre du FIA.

Consulter le site <http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/f/finacial/aif/index.shtml>. ⓘ

Renforcer les capacités et les partenariats dans le domaine de l'innovation

Pour encourager les PME à renforcer leur capacité d'innovation, il importe de bien faire connaître les avantages de l'innovation. Les composantes clés doivent avoir des rapports clairs entre elles et favoriser l'interaction entre tous les intervenants. Le réseau d'innovation de la région s'en trouve renforcé, ce qui donne lieu à des activités de recherche-développement accrues et à une plus grande commercialisation des produits sur les marchés. L'APÉCA sait que les universités de la région possèdent de solides capacités en recherche-développement et qu'un partenariat avec le

La recherche-développement s'intensifie dans la région de l'Atlantique, et l'APÉCA y contribue de belle façon. De 2000 à 2004, les dépenses en recherche-développement industrielle dans la région sont passées de 132 à 204 millions de dollars. En 2004, les dépenses en recherche-développement industrielle des clients de l'APÉCA représentaient 38 % des dépenses totales en recherche-développement de la région.

(Source : Division des sciences, de l'innovation et de l'information électronique, Statistique Canada)

Pour maximiser le rendement du capital investi dans la région de l'Atlantique, l'APECA appuie les projets qui présentent le plus grand potentiel de croissance future. Ces projets sont généralement lancés dans des secteurs où la région de l'Atlantique possède un avantage concurrentiel et dans les grappes naissantes d'entreprises du savoir. Citons notamment les technologies de l'information (notamment la géomatique et les communications), les technologies océanologiques, l'aquaculture, la biotechnologie, les technologies de la santé et les technologies médicales et, enfin, les technologies environnementales.

Les investissements effectués dans le cadre du FIA ont aussi pour but d'aider la région à créer des technologies qui permettront à des industries primaires, par exemple le pétrole et le gaz, l'aquaculture et l'agroalimentaire, les pêches, les forêts et les mines, d'améliorer leur compétitivité.

En 2004, le FIA a été soumis à une évaluation qui visait à mesurer les progrès accomplis jusqu'à présent, à renforcer les atouts du programme et à cerner les volets à améliorer. Cette évaluation a permis de conclure notamment que le FIA :

- génère de nouveaux investissements en recherche-développement pour chaque dollar investi;
- renforce la capacité de recherche-développement de la région;
- renforce les liens existant dans le réseau d'innovation de la région de l'Atlantique;
- favorise la recherche concertée et la commercialisation des technologies qui en découlent.

Depuis le 1^{er} avril 2003, l'APECA a accordé au-delà de 70 millions de dollars aux promoteurs de plus de 230 projets de recherche-développement dans le cadre de la composante Innovation de son PDE. Elle a contribué pour plus de 21 millions de dollars à plus de 85 projets d'intégration ou d'adaptation technologique. Cette aide financière a engendré des investissements de plus de 245 millions de dollars d'autres sources.

Le potentiel de commercialisation de la recherche-développement ne cesse de croître dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. Grâce au FIA, les fruits de nombreux travaux de recherche-développement ont pu passer du laboratoire au marché. Au cours des cinq séries concurrentielles du FIA :



Les entreprises solides engendrent de nouveaux investissements dans la région, et elles contribuent à la création d'emplois ainsi qu'à l'augmentation des revenus gagnés.

La productivité de la main-d'œuvre, qui est estimée à la lumière des ventes indexées par travailleur, a connu une croissance vigoureuse de 2001 à 2005. Plus précisément, elle a augmenté de 6,4 % par année chez les clients de l'APÉCA. Ce taux se compare avantageusement à la baisse de 0,5 % enregistrée chez les entreprises comparables, selon les données de Statistique Canada. De plus, le chiffre d'affaires des PME clientes de l'APÉCA a affiché une solide hausse de 4,7 % par année en moyenne de 2001 à 2005, alors que les ventes enregistrées par les entreprises comparables n'ont augmenté en moyenne que de 2,1 % pendant la même période.

L'APÉCA dispose de deux outils pour exécuter sa stratégie d'innovation : le FIA et le Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE). Ensemble, ces programmes concourent à l'objectif de l'APÉCA, soit de renforcer la capacité d'innovation de manière à améliorer la productivité. Voici les cinq grands volets de cette stratégie d'innovation :

- renforcement des réseaux d'innovation;
- appui aux secteurs stratégiques;
- renforcement des capacités d'innovation;
- élimination des lacunes au chapitre des compétences;
- élaboration de politiques et coordination.

Renforcer les réseaux d'innovation et appuyer les secteurs stratégiques

L'APÉCA cherche à accélérer le développement de l'industrie du savoir et à faciliter la transition des secteurs traditionnels en amenant les entreprises à renforcer leur capacité de recherche-développement de pointe. Créé en juillet 2000, le FIA a été conçu à cette fin. Le budget du FIA a été augmenté de 300 millions de dollars en juillet 2005. Un conseil consultatif indépendant, composé de dirigeants régionaux du monde des affaires et du milieu universitaire, examine l'ensemble des propositions soumises et fait des recommandations à l'APÉCA.

Le FIA investit dans la recherche-développement et dans des initiatives connexes, principalement dans le domaine des sciences naturelles et appliquées. Ces projets doivent avoir un lien direct avec la mise au point de produits, de procédés ou de services technologiques qui peuvent être commercialisés sur les marchés.

L'APÉCA s'est donné comme priorité notamment d'aider les PME à accroître leur productivité et à améliorer leur position concurrentielle. Que ce soit pour la création d'une nouvelle entreprise ou pour l'expansion ou la modernisation d'une entreprise déjà en exploitation, l'Agence investit dans les entreprises, ce qui les aide à améliorer leurs procédés, à réduire leur production de déchets, à acquérir de nouvelles technologies, à former leurs travailleurs et à parfaire leurs compétences en gestion.

L'innovation, le renforcement de la capacité d'innovation par la recherche-développement et l'intégration des technologies sont essentiels à la productivité et à la compétitivité de la région. De tout temps, la productivité de la main-d'œuvre des provinces de l'Atlantique, facteur crucial pour l'accroissement des revenus et la création de richesses, est inférieure à celle du reste du pays. Cette situation est en partie attribuable à la structure industrielle, et en partie imputable aux faibles niveaux d'investissement dans la recherche-développement, les technologies ainsi que la scolarité et la formation des travailleurs.

4.2 Innovation

Les campagnes de marketing lancées par le PTCA ont donné des résultats intéressants pour la région de l'Atlantique. Ce modèle de partenariat porte fruit – le dossier de route du PTCA le prouve bien. Pour chaque dollar investi dans le marketing à l'étranger de 2003 à 2006, les dépenses touristiques s'élevaient à 16,83 \$. En 2007, le PTCA a engendré des recettes touristiques de 87 millions de dollars pour la région de l'Atlantique, ce qui représente 17 \$ pour chaque dollar investi dans des campagnes de marketing à l'étranger.

de l'Autriche et la Suisse.
de l'Atlantique, le Royaume-Uni, la France, le Japon, l'Allemagne, étrangers, tels que la Nouvelle-Angleterre, les États du centre du littoral de publicité étayées par des recherches solides sur d'importants marchés Depuis sa création, ce partenariat multipartite a mené à bien des campagnes

Initiative au budget de 20 millions de dollars, le PTCA est né d'une approche régionale concertée qui avait pour but de promouvoir la région de l'Atlantique comme destination touristique de tout premier ordre sur des marchés étrangers clés. Ce groupe panatlantique est composé de neuf membres représentant l'APÉCA, les ministères du Tourisme du Nouveau-Brunswick, de la Nouvelle-Écosse, de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador et les associations touristiques des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique.

La société exporte près de 90 % de ses produits sur des marchés disséminés aux quatre coins de la planète, et elle soutient la concurrence de fournisseurs établis en Asie et ailleurs. Elle s'est également imposée comme chef de file de la fabrication de produits écologiques en devenant la deuxième entreprise au Canada à fabriquer des cartes de circuits exempts de plomb.

L'électronique est l'un des secteurs les plus compétitifs au monde. Toutefois, la région de l'Atlantique peut s'y tailler une place, dans la mesure où elle dispose de bons travailleurs ainsi que de systèmes et du matériel appropriés. Nous en sommes la preuve vivante.

Chuck Cartmill
Propriétaire et fondateur
C-Vision Ltd.

recherche-développement et sa capacité de gestion de l'APECA, C-Vision a accru sa capacité de développement des compétences en innovation (IDCI) dirigées par l'APECA – l'une à Paris et l'autre à Boston –, C-Vision a pu se faire connaître sur les marchés et élargir son bassin de clients.

En 2007, C-Vision a entrepris un projet de recherche-développement de deux millions de dollars soutenu par le Fonds d'innovation de l'Atlantique (FIA) de l'APECA. Il s'agit de la fabrication de systèmes d'éclairage routier à diode électroluminescente, une technologie éconergétique qui a une durée de vie plus longue que l'éclairage classique. Les économies qui y sont rattachées pourraient être de l'ordre de 85 % par rapport à des systèmes comparables.

Initiative de fabrication sans gaspillage Nouveau-Brunswick

Au cours de la période visée par le présent rapport, l'APECA a élaboré et implanté l'Initiative de fabrication sans gaspillage au Nouveau-Brunswick. L'objectif consistait à aider les entreprises à accroître leur efficacité opérationnelle et à régler leurs problèmes de productivité dans le but d'accroître leur compétitivité globale. Les résultats d'une étude d'impact réalisée en 2006 révèlent que les entreprises participantes ont enregistré des progrès marqués : une hausse du nombre d'employés à temps plein, une augmentation des revenus bruts et un bond de plus de 20 000 \$ des revenus bruts par employé à temps plein.

Partenariat du tourisme du Canada atlantique

Dans bien des cas, l'Agence joue un important rôle de coordination qui donne lieu à des partenariats fructueux dans un secteur précis de l'économie des provinces de l'Atlantique. Le Partenariat du tourisme du Canada atlantique (PTCA) en est un bel exemple.

Impact de l'APÉCA sur le produit intérieur brut

Il est estimé que le produit intérieur brut (PIB) réel était de 1,2 milliard de dollars de plus (en dollars constants de 1997) en 2007 qu'il ne l'aurait été en l'absence de l'aide directe que l'APÉCA a accordée aux entreprises. (Le PIB réel correspond à la valeur ajoutée indexée des biens et des services produits au cours d'une année donnée dans une économie.)

C'est le secteur de la fabrication qui profite le plus du soutien de l'Agence. En fait, environ 50 % des projets commerciaux ayant reçu l'aide de l'APÉCA y étaient concentrés. Par conséquent, la production manufacturière de la région de l'Atlantique était plus élevée de 312 millions de dollars en 2007 qu'elle ne l'aurait été sans l'apport de l'APÉCA.

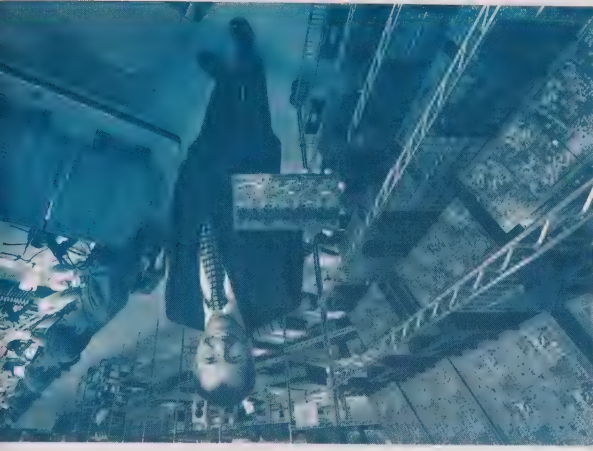
L'APÉCA a ainsi contribué à créer un environnement qui permet aux PME de devenir plus concurrentielles et durables. Comme en témoignent les exemples qui suivent, ses programmes et ses initiatives ont un impact direct sur la réussite des PME.



C-Vision Ltd.

La société C-Vision est un fabricant de produits électroniques de pointe établi en milieu rural. Elle est la preuve que les sociétés innovatrices n'ont pas nécessairement à s'installer dans les grands centres urbains pour réussir. C-Vision montre aussi que l'innovation et la productivité sont la clé de la compétitivité.

L'entreprise, qui a son siège à Amherst, en Nouvelle-Écosse, procure un emploi à environ 95 travailleurs de la région. Elle offre divers services aux constructeurs de matériel : assemblage de cartes de circuits imprimés et de modules électroniques, intégration de systèmes, prototypage et maquettes, gestion des matériaux, logistique et gestion optimale des commandes.



Charles Carthill, fondateur et président de C-Vision Ltd.

- **L'entrepreneurs et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires**, qui sont essentiels à la prospérité à long terme des entreprises.

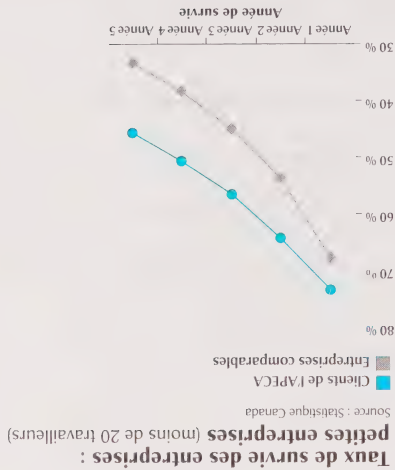
- **Le continuum de financement** – Il importe de corriger les déficits de financement des PME, soit en leur accordant directement des fonds, soit en travaillant avec d'autres fournisseurs de capitaux pour mieux répondre à leurs besoins financiers aux diverses étapes de leur cycle de vie.

- **L'accès à l'information relative aux affaires (Entreprises Canada)** – Les particuliers de l'Atlantique qui souhaitent se lancer en affaires ou agrandir leur entreprise doivent avoir accès à l'information dont ils ont besoin.

L'APÉCA offre une vaste gamme de programmes et de services pour améliorer le climat de croissance des entreprises. Certains lui permettent de fournir directement aux entrepreneurs les outils et les ressources dont ils ont besoin à tous les stades du cycle de vie de leur entreprise. D'autres l'amènent à travailler avec des établissements d'enseignement, des organismes d'aide aux entreprises et des ministères pour élaborer et mettre en œuvre des politiques et des programmes.

Impact de l'APÉCA sur la survie des PME

La survie d'une entreprise dépend de nombreux facteurs, notamment son âge, sa situation géographique et sa taille. Dans la région de l'Atlantique, 87 % des entreprises sont de petite taille (moins de 20 travailleurs), et 80 % des clients de l'APÉCA qui sont à l'étape du démarrage se classent dans cette catégorie. L'impact des programmes de l'APÉCA est évident chez ces petites entreprises. Le taux de survie des petites entreprises clientes de l'APÉCA est de 46 % après la période cruciale des cinq années suivant le démarrage. En l'absence de soutien de l'APÉCA, le taux de survie des entreprises est de treize points de pourcentage inférieur.



Chapitre 4

Développement des entreprises

4.1 Aperçu

Le mandat de l'APÉCA est axé sur le développement des entreprises, en particulier des petites et moyennes entreprises (PME). Celles-ci représentent plus de 90 % des entreprises en exploitation dans la région de l'Atlantique. C'est donc dire que l'Agence joue un rôle de premier plan dans la croissance des revenus gagnés, dans la création d'emploi et dans l'accroissement du niveau de vie de la région.

L'accroissement de la productivité et de la compétitivité – une condition essentielle au développement des entreprises.

L'Agence reconnaît que, pour s'acquitter de ce mandat, elle doit se concentrer sur la productivité et la compétitivité des entreprises afin d'assurer leur réussite sur les marchés intérieurs et étrangers. En exécutant ses programmes, elle s'attaque à un certain nombre de facteurs qui contribuent à maintenir la productivité de la région de l'Atlantique à des niveaux inférieurs à ceux du reste du pays. Citons notamment la capacité d'innovation des entreprises, les dépenses en recherche-développement, les compétences en affaires des entrepreneurs, les niveaux d'exportation et le degré d'intégration des nouvelles technologies, notamment par l'investissement dans la machinerie et l'équipement.

L'APÉCA a adopté une approche intégrée qui porte sur les éléments ci-après.

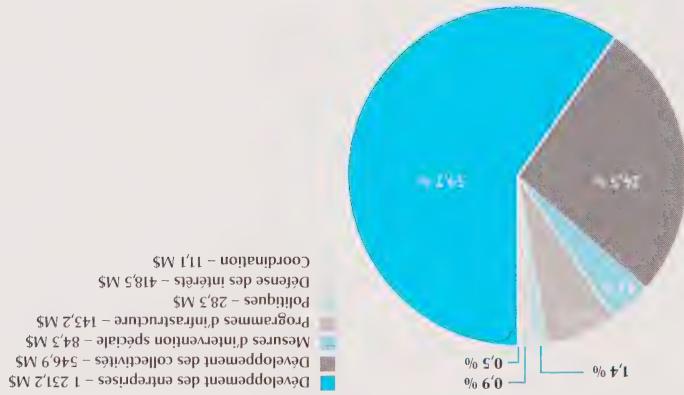
• **L'innovation** – Il importe d'investir dans la mise au point de produits et dans l'amélioration de la productivité, deux facteurs essentiels à la compétitivité des entreprises.

• **Le commerce et l'investissement** – Le développement des exportations est essentiel à la croissance des entreprises. Les investissements étrangers renforcent l'assise économique de la région et rehausseront son potentiel de croissance.

Ressources

Dans les cinq années visées par le présent rapport, l'Agence a dépensé 2,1 milliards de dollars, ce qui comprend 143,2 millions de dollars dans le cadre des programmes d'Infrastructure Canada et des paiements de transfert législatifs¹ de 5,9 millions de dollars.

Dépenses de l'Agence par activité de programme – 2003-2008



¹ Les paiements de transfert législatifs comprennent des obligations contractées en 2003-2004 en vertu de la Loi sur les prêts aux petites entreprises et de la Loi sur le financement des petites entreprises du Canada. Depuis, les obligations propres à la région de l'Atlantique sont comptabilisées par Industrie Canada.

- collectivités des Premières nations;
- municipalités.

Voici quelques-unes des activités réalisées de concert avec ces

partenaires :

- Travailler avec les provinces et les municipalités à faire progresser les priorités du gouvernement du Canada, tout en défendant les priorités et les intérêts régionaux à Ottawa.
- Amener le secteur privé à participer à des projets de recherche et à des initiatives de commercialisation.
- Travailler avec des universités et des instituts de recherche pour faire avancer le programme d'innovation de la région, amener la région à participer plus activement à la mise en œuvre de la stratégie d'innovation du Canada et veiller à ce que la région participe aux programmes nationaux de la Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation, du Conseil national de recherches du Canada, du Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie du Canada et de Génome Canada.
- Collaborer avec une gamme variée d'organismes locaux, tels que les corporations au bénéfice du développement communautaire, les organismes de développement économique régional, d'autres ordres de gouvernement et des organismes sans but lucratif, afin de faire progresser le développement économique des collectivités.
- Participer aux grandes initiatives de l'industrie du tourisme par l'intermédiaire du Partenariat du tourisme du Canada atlantique, de missions de pratiques exemplaires et de l'Initiative technologique du Canada atlantique.
- À titre de principal responsable fédéral, collaborer avec les gouvernements des provinces de l'Atlantique à des initiatives de développement des exportations, notamment dans le cadre de missions commerciales d'Équipe Canada Atlantique ainsi que de l'Entente Canada – provinces de l'Atlantique pour la promotion du commerce extérieur.
- Travailler en collaboration avec Transports Canada, Affaires étrangères et Commerce international Canada, les gouvernements provinciaux de l'Atlantique et les intervenants de l'industrie afin de promouvoir la Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique.



Figure 3

Partenaires

L'Agence est résolue à aider la région à devenir son propre moteur de croissance économique. Elle travaille donc en partenariat avec tout un éventail d'intervenants du secteur public, du monde des affaires, du milieu universitaire et des collectivités afin d'assurer le développement à long terme de la région. Voici une liste partielle de ses partenaires :

- entreprises;
- organismes communautaires de développement économique et groupes bénévoles;
- universités et collèges;
- instituts de recherche;
- autres ministères fédéraux;
- gouvernements provinciaux;

Chapitre 3

L'APECA et son mandat

L'APECA a cerné trois secteurs d'activité stratégiques qui s'inscrivent dans sa mission et dans les avantages qu'elle cherche à obtenir pour les citoyens et citoyennes de l'Atlantique. Les voici :

- **Développement des entreprises** – Accélérer la croissance des entreprises de l'Atlantique, en particulier des petites et moyennes entreprises (PME), et accroître leur compétitivité, en plus de favoriser le développement de l'infrastructure de manière à augmenter la productivité, les revenus gagnés et le nombre d'emplois créés.
- **Développement des collectivités** – Améliorer l'infrastructure économique des collectivités et renforcer leurs capacités de planification stratégique, de manière à améliorer les perspectives d'emploi et à stimuler la croissance économique de la région de l'Atlantique.

- **Politiques, défense des intérêts et coordination** – Adopter des positions stratégiques étayées par des recherches solides afin de promouvoir le potentiel de la région, veiller à ce que la région exerce une influence sur les politiques et les programmes nationaux qui touchent son développement et ses intérêts et faciliter la coordination d'autres politiques et programmes fédéraux dans la région, de manière à adopter des approches intégrées et plus efficaces pour le développement économique des provinces de l'Atlantique.

Ces trois résultats stratégiques sont présentés dans l'Architecture d'activités de programme de l'APECA, qui est illustrée à la figure 3. Ils reflètent les résultats de recherches et d'analyses stratégiques, les résultats d'un examen périodique de l'efficacité de ses programmes, un dialogue permanent avec d'autres intervenants de la région ainsi que les priorités et les grandes orientations du gouvernement du Canada.

- financer des projets lancés par des entreprises pour agrandir ou moderniser leurs installations, accroître leur productivité ou parfaire leurs compétences en affaires;
- appuyer et promouvoir des initiatives décisives de développement de l'infrastructure et du commerce, telles que la Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique;
- jouer un rôle de leader dans l'élaboration de stratégies régionales, par exemple la stratégie démographique, qui vise à attirer et à retenir leurs travailleurs, à les intégrer au marché du travail et à développer leurs compétences pour répondre aux besoins de la nouvelle économie;
- mobiliser les collectivités pour les amener à élaborer des plans et à lancer des initiatives qui appuient le développement des entreprises et des industries locales et qui investissent dans l'infrastructure clé du développement économique.

industriels existants ou émergents, l'accroissement des exportations et des investissements et la création de collectivités durables. L'Agence fournit aux collectivités les ressources dont elles ont besoin pour mettre en œuvre leurs propres stratégies d'investissement et de développement de l'infrastructure. Elle s'attaque aussi aux défis démographiques actuels en élaborant, de concert avec ses partenaires, des stratégies destinées à améliorer les débouchés de perfectionnement des compétences des résidents actuels tout en attirant des travailleurs qualifiés dans la région.

Marier les priorités économiques de l'APECA à celles du gouvernement du Canada

Dans les cinq dernières années, les stratégies de l'APECA ont été dictées par les grandes priorités nationales et régionales, l'impact constant de la mondialisation des marchés et la nécessité de renforcer l'économie du Canada par un accroissement de la productivité, de la compétitivité et de l'innovation.

La stratégie adoptée par le gouvernement du Canada mise sur l'investissement dans des travailleurs du savoir qualifiés, dans la recherche de pointe et dans l'innovation pour aider les régions à exploiter les possibilités offertes par l'économie mondiale. L'APECA a appuyé cette stratégie par le Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique en harmonisant ses programmes avec les priorités du gouvernement afin de créer un environnement où les citoyens du pays peuvent prospérer.

Le 25 juin 2007

Le très honorable Stephen Harper
Fredericton (Nouveau-Brunswick)

Notre objectif consiste à nous assurer que chaque région du pays a l'occasion de bénéficier des possibilités économiques énormes que peut saisir le Canada.

Dans le cadre d'Avantage Canada, notre gouvernement a établi un plan économique sensé qui vise à garantir aux Canadiens des emplois mieux rémunérés et une croissance dynamique.

Discours du Trône
Le 16 octobre 2007

Par ses activités, l'Agence appuie les composantes savoir, entrepreneurship et infrastructure du plan économique à long terme du Canada. Pendant la période de 2003 à 2008, elle s'est concentrée sur les activités suivantes :

- promouvoir la commercialisation des résultats de la recherche de pointe; appuyer les partenariats en innovation entre le secteur privé et le milieu universitaire;

Section 2

Un mode d'organisation axé sur les résultats

À sa création, en 1987, l'APÉCA incarnait un nouveau modèle de développement économique, dans le cadre duquel les décisions concernant les provinces de l'Atlantique devaient se prendre dans la région même. Les programmes seraient dorénavant conçus par et pour des Canadiens de l'Atlantique. Comme le concluait Donald Savoie en 1987 dans un rapport intitulé *Establishing the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency*, une agence vouée au développement de la région aurait les meilleures chances de produire des résultats concrets. Ce modèle nécessitait cependant une approche décentralisée. C'est pour cette raison que l'Agence a établi son siège social à Moncton, au Nouveau-Brunswick, et qu'elle est présente dans chacune des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique et à Ottawa.

L'APÉCA est un chef de file régional de la recherche sur les politiques économiques. Elle agit en défenseur de la région de l'Atlantique, transmettant à Ottawa de l'information sur les forces, les intérêts et les préoccupations de la région tout en veillant à ce que les priorités du gouvernement fédéral reflètent les besoins des provinces de l'Atlantique. Depuis son bureau d'Ottawa, l'APÉCA défend les intérêts des citoyens de l'Atlantique dans l'élaboration de politiques et de programmes nationaux, et elle les aide à tirer parti de marchés d'approvisionnement.

Pour s'acquitter du mandat que lui confère la *Loi organique de 1987 sur le Canada atlantique*, l'Agence travaille à créer des possibilités de croissance économique dans la région en aidant les entreprises à devenir plus concurrentielles, plus innovatrices et plus productives, en travaillant avec les collectivités à développer et à diversifier leur économie, et en faisant la promotion des atouts de la région.

Si l'APÉCA continue d'appuyer le démarrage et la croissance des PME, elle s'emploie aussi à stimuler la commercialisation des produits de la recherche-développement locale, la croissance des secteurs

économique et qui aident les collectivités à se tourner vers des secteurs autres que l'activité économique traditionnelle.

Centre des sciences de la mer Huntsman St. Andrews (Nouveau-Brunswick)

Le Centre des sciences de la mer Huntsman de St. Andrews, au Nouveau-Brunswick, montre bien les bienfaits des programmes et des efforts de l'APECA dans les régions rurales.

Le Centre joue un rôle important en réalisant des recherches cruciales pour l'économie locale et pour l'exploitation et la gestion des ressources côtières des provinces de l'Atlantique. Ses vastes installations de retenue et d'élevage du poisson de mer et du poisson d'eau douce permettent

à des entreprises commerciales et à des scientifiques d'effectuer des travaux de recherche-développement pour développer le secteur des pêches et de l'aquaculture dans la région de l'Atlantique.

Les sommes que l'APECA a puisées dans le Fonds des collectivités innovatrices (FCI) et le Fonds d'innovation de l'Atlantique (FIA) ont contribué à la création d'un partenariat de recherche qui réunit le Centre des sciences de la mer Huntsman, l'Université du Nouveau-Brunswick, la Fédération du saumon atlantique et Pêches et Océans Canada. Ce partenariat représente un investissement stratégique dans le développement des collectivités aquacoles comté de Charlotte, où la grappe des activités essentielles a engendré une diversification économique essentielle à la région.

L'APECA nous a aidés à améliorer nos installations, à étudier de nouveaux procédés, à établir de nouvelles alliances stratégiques et à trouver des applications commerciales pour nos travaux de recherche. Elle nous apporte un appui inestimable.

Bill Robertson
Directeur général
Centre des sciences de la mer Huntsman

le principal moteur de cette croissance. Deux mégaprojets dominent les investissements dans la construction non résidentielle : le projet de remise à neuf de la centrale nucléaire de Point Lepreau et la construction du terminal de gaz naturel liquéfié Canaport à Saint John. En 2007, les investissements dans les immobilisations ont atteint six milliards de dollars, ce qui représente une augmentation de 5,4 % par rapport à 2006 et le plus haut niveau jamais enregistré.

En réalisant des gains appréciables dans les domaines des TI, des finances et des assurances ainsi que du commerce de détail et de gros, le secteur des services a joué un rôle prépondérant dans la croissance économique de la province.

Si l'économie se porte bien dans l'ensemble, la croissance et l'expansion économiques sont réparties de façon inégale dans la province. Les collectivités rurales du Nouveau-Brunswick ont toujours des obstacles importants à surmonter : les graves perturbations causées par les différends commerciaux, la rationalisation des ressources, l'appréciation de la devise canadienne et le prix élevé des produits de base.

L'APÉCA a fait des investissements stratégiques dans les principaux secteurs d'activité du Nouveau-Brunswick afin de les amener à participer pleinement à l'expansion économique actuelle. Par exemple, dans l'industrie aquacole, elle a financé des projets d'importance cruciale qui mettent l'accent sur l'innovation et la technologie, l'amélioration de la productivité et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires, le renforcement des capacités et le marketing. Ces investissements ont permis de créer des emplois et de diversifier l'économie des collectivités rurales et côtières de la région.

L'Agence a également lancé l'Initiative Chaleur-Restigouche, mesure tréennale visant à aider les PME du Nord-Est du Nouveau-Brunswick à s'adapter à la fermeture de la fonderie et de la mine Brunswick ainsi qu'au ralentissement du secteur de l'exploitation forestière. Parmi ses principales réalisations, il convient de signaler l'évaluation approfondie de plus de 149 clients éventuels. Ces évaluations ont permis à 40 PME de réaliser des projets pour mettre au point de nouveaux produits, trouver de nouveaux marchés au pays et à l'étranger et parfaire leurs compétences en gestion, en particulier dans les domaines du commerce et de l'innovation. Au Nouveau-Brunswick, l'APÉCA continuera d'aider les entreprises à s'intégrer pleinement à l'économie en faisant des investissements qui renforcent les capacités locales, qui favorisent la diversification

Nouveau-Brunswick

Le Nouveau-Brunswick a dû surmonter divers obstacles de 2003 à 2007, en particulier le secteur de l'exploitation forestière et celui de la fabrication de produits non énergétiques, en raison de l'appréciation de la devise canadienne et du ralentissement de l'économie des États-Unis. Malgré tout, l'économie de la province est demeurée forte, ce qui témoigne de sa diversité croissante.

De 2003 à 2007, le Nouveau-Brunswick a enregistré une croissance économique moyenne de 2 % par année, et les investissements ont été

L'APFCA a investi plus de trois millions de dollars du FIA dans un projet d'innovation de dix millions de dollars entrepris par IVT pour perfectionner sa plateforme d'administration de vaccins. Il est prévu que les vaccins découlant de ce projet comprendront des produits pour la prévention des maladies infectieuses humaines ainsi que des vaccins thérapeutiques pour le traitement de maladies humaines.

Par exemple, la première gamme de produits commercialisables de la plateforme exclusive d'IVT porte le nom de *SpayVac* – un vaccin contre-acceptif à dose unique pour le contrôle des naissances chez les animaux de compagnie et les bêtes sauvages. IVT travaille également avec des experts et des partenaires étrangers à mettre au point une plateforme d'administration d'un vaccin capable d'éliminer 100 % des tumeurs dans les modèles précliniques utilisés pour le traitement du cancer.

ImmunoVaccine Technologies Inc. Halifax (Nouvelle-Écosse)

La société de biotechnologie ImmunoVaccine Technologies Inc. (IVT) est le fruit de travaux de recherche effectués dans un laboratoire universitaire. Elle a été constituée en 2000 pour commercialiser un vaccin mis au point à l'Université Dalhousie, à Halifax.

De concert avec divers partenaires, tels que l'Université Dalhousie, le Collège de médecine vétérinaire de l'Atlantique et le Collège d'agriculture de la Nouvelle-Écosse, IVT

travaille à mettre au point une technologie biologique qui stimule le système immunitaire en aidant le corps à produire des anticorps d'une efficacité accrue. Cette technologie, maintenant connue sous la marque de

commerce VacciMax®, peut s'appliquer aux humains et aux animaux.

Par exemple, la première gamme de produits commercialisables de la plateforme exclusive d'IVT porte le nom de *SpayVac* – un vaccin contre-acceptif à dose unique pour le contrôle des naissances chez les animaux de compagnie et les bêtes sauvages. IVT travaille également avec des experts et des partenaires étrangers à mettre au point une plateforme d'administration d'un vaccin capable d'éliminer 100 %

des tumeurs dans les modèles précliniques utilisés pour le traitement du cancer.

L'avantage que procure le soutien de l'APFCA, c'est qu'il a aidé notre entreprise à attirer d'autres investisseurs. L'APFCA reconnaît que nous avons réalisé une importante percée technologique qui aura un impact très positif sur le secteur de la biotechnologie dans la région de l'Atlantique.

Brian Lowe
Vice-président
ImmunoVaccine Technologies Inc.

Les industries primaires traditionnelles traversent une période de grands changements. Par exemple, les entreprises de la transformation du bois et des aliments ont mis au point de nouveaux produits à valeur ajoutée qui leur ont permis d'accroître considérablement leurs exportations.

L'économie de la Nouvelle-Écosse, qui était jusqu'à tout récemment tributaire des ressources naturelles, est en train de se transformer en une économie du savoir où l'innovation et la compétitivité à l'échelle mondiale occupent une place prépondérante. Cependant, de nombreux obstacles sociaux et économiques entravent cette métamorphose. Par exemple, bon nombre d'industries de base (pêches, exploitation forestière, agriculture et tourisme) peinent à s'adapter à la concurrence de plus en plus vive que leur livrent d'autres pays exportateurs. Dans ces secteurs, le succès dépendra en grande partie de leur capacité d'innover et d'accroître leur productivité.

Les régions rurales, en particulier, subiront les contrechocs de la faible croissance démographique et du vieillissement de la population. Ces facteurs se combineront pour empêcher les collectivités rurales de maintenir et d'accroître le rythme de leur croissance économique. Ces collectivités devront redoubler d'effort pour s'assurer un bassin de main-d'œuvre suffisant.

L'APECA a fait des investissements importants dans la recherche-développement en Nouvelle-Écosse. Grâce aux sommes puisées dans le FIA, elle a facilité la création de partenariats publics-privés pour la mise au point de technologies présentant un fort potentiel de commercialisation. De plus, l'Agence a investi des fonds du PDE pour aider des entreprises à acquérir de nouvelles technologies et à adopter des méthodologies plus productives. C'est dans ce domaine que l'APECA compte concentrer ses efforts dans les années à venir.

L'APECA s'est associée à des entreprises et à des chercheurs du secteur des sciences de la vie, et elle a appuyé plusieurs projets dans ce domaine. Dans le Nova Scotia Life Sciences Asset Map (Inventaire des atouts en sciences de la vie de la Nouvelle-Écosse), il est estimé que, en 2005, la province comptait une cinquantaine d'entreprises en sciences de la vie qui vendaient près de 500 biens sur les marchés mondiaux. Collectivement, ces produits engendraient un chiffre d'affaires de plus de 181 millions de dollars, la plupart dans les sous-secteurs des aliments fonctionnels et nutraceutiques, de la pharmacaceutique et de l'agriculture. Presque tous les produits des sciences de la vie de la province sont vendus à l'étranger. Quatre grandes entreprises se partagent plus de 85 % des ventes totales.

En Nouvelle-Écosse, le secteur de la fabrication a été profondément touché par l'appréciation de la devise canadienne, ce qui a entraîné la perte de la position concurrentielle de cette province sur les marchés mondiaux. Cependant, la création de nouveaux secteurs, tels que les technologies de l'information et des communications, la biotechnologie, les sciences de la vie et les ressources biologiques, l'aérospatiale et la défense, la fabrication de pointe et les technologies marines, sous-tend les progrès réalisés dans la région. L'aérospatiale, en particulier, est porteur de promesses : les entreprises prennent de l'expansion et lancent de nouveaux projets.

De 2003 à 2007, la Nouvelle-Écosse a connu une croissance économique modérée qui s'élevait à 1,4 % en moyenne. Cette croissance était alimentée principalement par l'essor du secteur des services et le raffermissement des ventes au détail. Dans l'industrie des services, par exemple, les services financiers ont enregistré une forte croissance, par suite de l'expansion ou de l'établissement de plusieurs entreprises financières étrangères à Halifax. L'APÉCA a contribué à ce développement dans le cadre de la composante Commerce et investissement du Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique. Elle a investi dans la promotion de la Nouvelle-Écosse en tant qu'emplacement de choix pour des banques et des sociétés de technologies de l'information (TI) étrangères. Cela s'est traduit par la création directe d'emplois dans la province.

Nouvelle-Écosse

et ouvre la voie à une diversification de l'économie et à une plus grande stabilité économique pour les collectivités des environs du cap North.

Cet investissement contribue grandement à la mise en valeur de sources d'énergie renouvelable au secteur de l'énergie éolienne en Amérique du Nord. L'énergie éolienne pour la prestation de services de mesure avec l'Institut allemand de signé un accord de coopération éoliens de petite et de grande besoins des promoteurs de projets



Si l'industrie de l'aérospatiale a connu un essor à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, c'est en grande partie grâce à la création de la Slemmon Park Corporation. Depuis son implantation au début des années 1990, cette industrie est devenue le deuxième exportateur en importance de la province; le chiffre d'affaires des entreprises qui en font partie totalise près de 200 millions de dollars par année. Des sociétés locales telles que MDS-Prad et Atlantic Turbines International Inc. sont devenues des chefs de file de l'industrie dans l'économie du savoir. À l'issue de travaux de recherche-développement de pointe, l'entreprise MDS-Prad s'est imposée comme l'un des principaux producteurs de revêtements protecteurs au monde. Grâce à ses techniques ultraperfectionnées de réparation de moteurs, la société Atlantic Turbines International est devenue un leader dans le domaine de l'entretien et de la remise en état de turbines à gaz.

La grappe des technologies de l'information de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard continue de solidifier ses bases grâce à la somme de ses parties. Les entrepreneurs avisés d'aujourd'hui savent bien que les technologies innovatrices égalisent le rapport de forces dans la prestation de services et de produits sur les marchés mondiaux. L'emplacement géographique n'a plus d'importance. Le FIA, géré par l'APÉCA, a permis à des entrepreneurs de mettre au point un logiciel commercialement viable qui peut aider les administrations et les sociétés d'utilité publique locales à accroître leur efficacité, de créer un logiciel convivial et fiable pour les dispensateurs de soins de santé au Canada et ailleurs dans le monde et de concevoir des applications logicielles multifonctionnelles pour l'information et l'imagerie radiologiques.

Institut de l'énergie éolienne du Canada Cap North (Île-du-Prince-Édouard)

De concert avec la PEI Energy Corporation et Ressources naturelles Canada, l'APÉCA a conclu un partenariat avec Ressources West, organisme de développement économique régional de l'Ouest de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, et l'Institut de l'énergie éolienne du Canada (IEEC), important établissement de recherche et d'essai de systèmes de production

d'énergie éolienne, afin de saisir les possibilités qui se présentent dans le secteur de l'énergie éolienne.

Ce partenariat a donné lieu à la création d'un immeuble de 7 860 pieds carrés équipé de laboratoires et d'ateliers conçus pour répondre aux

Le Canada atlantique possède un potentiel énorme en matière d'énergie éolienne et l'IEEC, à titre d'exploitant du site d'essais en matière d'énergie éolienne le plus ancien et le plus réputé du Canada, a un rôle de premier plan à jouer pour exploiter tout ce potentiel.

Scott Harper
Directeur exécutif de l'IEEC

Par l'intermédiaire du Programme de développement des entreprises (PDE) et du FIA ainsi que du Plan d'action pour nos océans (2005-2007) du gouvernement fédéral, l'APECA a contribué de façon substantielle à la croissance de ce secteur. En 2006, Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador comptait 52 entreprises de technologies océanologiques, ce qui représente une augmentation de 58 % par rapport à 2001. Pendant la même période, seize nouvelles entreprises de technologies océanologiques ont vu le jour, le nombre d'emplois dans ce secteur s'est accru de plus de 62 % et les recettes totales des entreprises ont presque doublé, passant de 117 millions de dollars à plus de 225 millions de dollars. À l'heure actuelle, l'objectif établi pour la grappe des technologies océanologiques de la province consiste à faire passer les recettes annuelles de cette industrie à un milliard de dollars en dix ans.

Ile-du-Prince-Édouard

De 2003 à 2007, la croissance économique de l'Ile-du-Prince-Édouard a atteint 2,3 % en moyenne. Le secteur des services a connu de bons résultats pendant cette période, grâce à l'établissement de centres d'appels, d'entreprises de services financiers et de sociétés de technologies de l'information dans la province. L'Ile-du-Prince-Édouard a également consolidé sa réputation comme chef de file de la mise en valeur de sources d'énergie renouvelable. En effet, d'importantes sommes ont été investies dans la création de nouveaux parcs éoliens afin de renforcer les capacités de production d'énergie éolienne. En outre, l'APECA, en collaboration avec Ressources naturelles Canada et Transports Canada, a créé l'Institut de l'énergie éolienne du Canada à l'Ile-du-Prince-Édouard.

L'APECA a également joué un rôle crucial dans la création d'une grappe des biosciences à l'Ile-du-Prince-Édouard. Ses investissements ont permis aux établissements de recherche-développement du secteur privé et du secteur public de développer leur expertise et d'acquérir l'expérience voulue pour promouvoir cette grappe. La mise au point de nouveaux produits pharmaceutiques, la conception de méthodes de production durables pour des biocomposés marins, la création de revêtements protecteurs résistants à l'érosion pour l'industrie de l'aérospatiale, la découverte de vaccins, la création de nouveaux produits alimentaires et produits pour le soin de la peau par l'exploitation des sciences nutritionnelles et la recherche sur des maladies neurodégénératives humaines, toutes ces percées témoignent de la croissance dynamique de ce secteur naissant.

atlantique et comparaison avec ce qui se fait à l'étranger, réalisée en partenariat avec Ressources naturelles Canada et Industrie Canada, et Location, Environmental and Other Factors Influencing Exploration and Development of Labrador Gas, réalisée en collaboration avec les entreprises pétrolières et gazières qui s'intéressent à la zone extracôtière du Labrador.

La jeune industrie du pétrole extracôtière de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador a également été la source de plusieurs possibilités de recherche et d'innovation pour les entreprises de technologies océaniques, notamment dans les domaines de la gestion des glaces, des communications maritimes et de la sécurité en milieu marin. L'industrie des technologies océaniques de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador a connu une forte croissance dans les dix dernières années. En 2001, ce secteur était formé de 33 entreprises qui affichaient un chiffre d'affaires total de 117 millions de dollars. En 2005, il en comptait plus de 50, dont les ventes se chiffraient à 230 millions de dollars. Cette industrie comptait 1 470 travailleurs dans le secteur privé en 2005, ce qui représente une hausse de plus de 65 % par rapport à 2001. L'Agence a travaillé en étroite collaboration avec l'Institut des technologies océaniques du Conseil national de recherches du Canada, le Marine Institute de l'Université Memorial, le gouvernement de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador et les intervenants de l'industrie afin de favoriser la collaboration et de créer une grappe durable en technologies océaniques dans la province.

Développement de la grappe des technologies océaniques Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador

Le développement d'une grappe des technologies océaniques à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador a constitué une priorité de l'APÉCA au cours de la période visée par le rapport. L'Agence a collaboré avec des intervenants des technologies océaniques, par exemple l'Université Memorial de Terre-Neuve, les entreprises de technologies océaniques, le Conseil national de recherches du Canada, la municipalité de St. John's et le gouvernement provincial, afin de faire progresser ce secteur. L'élément distinctif de la stratégie de l'APÉCA dans ce domaine est son étroite collaboration avec les ministères fédéraux qui s'occupent des océans en vue de favoriser les solutions technologiques de conception canadienne pour relever les défis découlant de la gestion des océans.

La grappe des technologies océaniques donne aux entreprises de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador l'élan voulu pour mettre en commun leurs forces individuelles afin de devenir une puissante force collective. De plus en plus, l'industrie joue un rôle de leader stratégique. La province perçoit ce secteur comme un moteur de sa nouvelle économie.

L.G. O'Reilly
Directeur exécutif
Oceans Advance

ainsi qu'au développement d'une expertise dans des domaines tels que les technologies océanologiques. Le projet pétrolier extracôtier White Rose (2,4 milliards de dollars) et le gisement de nickel, de cuivre et de cobalt de la baie Voisey's, dans le Nord du Labrador (2,9 milliards de dollars), ont tous deux stimulé la construction dans la province, et, conjugués aux gains associés au minerai de fer, ils ont donné une impulsion à la production pétrolière et minière de 2003 à 2007.

La valeur de la production minière dans la province s'est accrue sensiblement ces dernières années, et ce, en raison de la hausse des cours mondiaux des produits de base et d'une intensification de la production. L'aide accordée à cette industrie par l'APECA vise à stimuler la recherche-développement et à maximiser les débouchés commerciaux. Par exemple, l'Agence a engagé la somme de 23,1 millions de dollars pour permettre à l'Université Memorial de Terre-Neuve de créer, dans le secteur minier, un centre d'innovation qui se concentrera sur les recherches en géosciences et en génie des procédés opérationnels. Les recherches ont mené à une amélioration des procédés opérationnels de la société Vale Inco dans la province, à de nouveaux contrats de caractérisation du minerai et à des progrès dans la commercialisation des produits de la recherche dans des domaines liés aux géosciences.

Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador a produit 134 millions de barils de pétrole en 2007, ce qui représente 14 % de la production totale du Canada. L'industrie pétrolière procure un emploi direct à 3 000 personnes, appuie un grand nombre d'entreprises locales de services et d'approvisionnement et contribue pour quelque 15 % au PIB réel annuel. L'APECA travaille en collaboration avec les intervenants de ce secteur à cerner de nouveaux débouchés, à attirer des investissements et à relever les défis liés à l'exploration et à la mise en valeur des ressources pétrolières et gazières

récemment dirigées : *Évaluation de l'industrie extracôtière au Canada* de la province. Voici quelques exemples d'études que l'APECA a



- Dans les cinq dernières années, l'emploi a progressé de 1,1 % par année en moyenne dans la région. En 2007, la région de l'Atlantique comptait près de 60 000 travailleurs actifs de plus qu'en 2002. Le taux de chômage a donc baissé de façon soutenue pendant cette période, atteignant 9,2 % en 2007, son niveau le plus bas en plus de 30 ans.
- Les exportations de produits de base issus de la région de l'Atlantique se sont accrues de 47 % entre 2002 et 2007. Cette hausse est attribuable à la forte croissance des exportations de produits pétroliers raffinés, de pétrole brut et de minéraux.
- La productivité de la main-d'œuvre a connu une croissance moyenne de 0,9 % dans la région de l'Atlantique pendant la période de 2003 à 2007, suivant ainsi la cadence enregistrée à l'échelle nationale. Si les dépenses en recherche-développement demeurent inférieures à la moyenne nationale dans la région de l'Atlantique, elles se sont malgré tout accrues au cours des dernières années. Selon les plus récentes statistiques, de 2000 à 2005, elles ont augmenté de 8,5 % par année.

L'APECA a joué un rôle important en s'adaptant rapidement aux forces sociales et économiques qui exerçaient leur influence sur la région. En exécutant ses programmes, elle a aidé chaque province de l'Atlantique à tirer parti de possibilités nées de ses forces :

- Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador a tiré parti de débouchés associés à ses abondantes ressources pétrolières et minérales ainsi qu'à son expertise dans les technologies océanographiques.
- L'Île-du-Prince-Édouard a poursuivi sa diversification économique en développant des grappes dans les secteurs des technologies de l'aérospatial, des technologies de l'information et des communications, du tourisme et de l'énergie éolienne.
- En Nouvelle-Écosse, l'émergence de nouvelles industries, notamment celles des sciences de la vie, des technologies de l'information et des finances, laisse présager de bonnes possibilités de création d'emplois pour l'avenir.
- Plusieurs développements survenus au Nouveau-Brunswick ont préparé la province à une croissance économique soutenue dans les domaines de l'énergie, de l'exploitation minière, de l'aquaculture et des services aux entreprises.

Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador

Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador jouit d'une économie florissante depuis cinq ans : le PIB réel croît de 3,1 % en moyenne. Ce rendement enviable est attribuable principalement à d'importants projets miniers et pétroliers

Impact sur les provinces de l'Atlantique – 2003-2008

Dans les cinq dernières années, plusieurs facteurs ont influé sur le développement de l'économie des provinces de l'Atlantique. La concurrence exercée à l'étranger par les nouveaux fabricants à faible coût et le taux de change élevé ont mis à rude épreuve l'assise manufacturière déjà limitée et les industries saisonnières de la région. Si les industries primaires continuent de sous-tendre une partie de l'économie, on assiste tout de même à une diversification, grâce à la production de biens et services à valeur ajoutée et à l'apparition de nouveaux secteurs du savoir dans le paysage économique. L'APÉCA a appuyé le développement de plusieurs de ces secteurs à l'heure où ils cherchaient des possibilités de croissance et des activités à valeur ajoutée.

Dans l'ensemble, les provinces de l'Atlantique jouissent d'une bonne santé économique depuis quelques années :

- De 2003 à 2007, le produit intérieur brut (PIB) réel de la région de l'Atlantique s'est accru de 2 % par année en moyenne. Cet essor est dû principalement à une forte croissance dans les secteurs des mines et de la construction.

technologique. Ce soutien financier de l'APÉCA a amené d'autres sources à faire des investissements de plus de 245 millions de dollars. L'Agence reconnaît l'importance de la mobilisation locale pour faciliter le développement économique des collectivités. Elle travaille en collaboration avec d'autres intervenants du développement économique pour veiller à ce que les investissements dans le développement des collectivités soient fondés sur des plans stratégiques qui misent sur les forces locales et qui aident les collectivités à surmonter leurs obstacles. Par un réseau d'organismes de développement économique régional et de corporations au bénéfice du développement communautaire, l'Agence a facilité la mobilisation des collectivités de l'Atlantique afin que leur développement se fasse selon une approche ascendante.

Les sommes consacrées par l'APÉCA au développement des collectivités ont amené divers partenaires – collectivités, provinces, organismes sans but lucratif et secteur privé – à faire eux aussi des investissements. Le soutien des collectivités est essentiel à la fructification des investissements dans le développement économique des collectivités et, en dernière analyse, à la viabilité à long terme. À mesure que les collectivités s'engagent dans l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre de projets, elles ne font pas que récolter les bienfaits de ces projets; elles renforcent aussi leurs capacités, ce qui les aide à prendre en mains leur propre développement économique à long terme.

Chapitre 2

Faire fond sur nos réalisations

Dans les cinq dernières années, l'APECA a continué de s'appuyer sur les réalisations du premier Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique (PICA) afin de favoriser l'innovation, de stimuler la recherche-développement, de promouvoir les exportations et les investissements étrangers directs, de renforcer les collectivités et d'aider les citoyens de l'Atlantique à acquérir les compétences nécessaires pour réussir en affaires au XXI^e siècle. Le résultat? Les Canadiens des provinces de l'Atlantique font preuve d'innovation et sont tournés vers les marchés d'exportation comme jamais auparavant.

Le potentiel de commercialisation de la recherche-développement ne cesse de croître dans la région de l'Atlantique. Le Fonds d'innovation de l'Atlantique (FIA) a grandement contribué à transférer les fruits de la recherche-développement du laboratoire au marché. Dans les cinq séries concurrentielles du FIA (dont quatre ont eu lieu au cours de la période quinquennale de 2003 à 2008) :

- L'APECA a reçu 627 propositions de promoteurs qui demandaient 1,96 milliard de dollars pour des projets évalués à 3,7 milliards de dollars.
- Elle a approuvé 192 projets, évalués à 1,16 milliard de dollars; les sommes versées dans le cadre du FIA se chiffraient à 512 millions de dollars.
- Le pourcentage de projets institutionnels (universités et collèges) exécutés avec un partenaire du secteur privé a augmenté de façon marquée, passant de 67 % au cours de la première série à 92 % au cours de la cinquième série.

Depuis le 1^{er} avril 2003, l'APECA a puisé plus de 70 millions de dollars dans la composante Innovation de son Programme de développement des entreprises pour financer plus de 230 projets de recherche-développement. Elle a également contribué pour au-delà de 21 millions de dollars à plus de 85 projets d'intégration ou d'adaptation

Face à cette nouvelle dynamique, l'APÉCA a adapté ses programmes d'aide aux entreprises, délaissant le soutien à l'acquisition d'immobilisations au profit d'atouts associés à la productivité – l'innovation, le marketing, le commerce international et le perfectionnement des ressources humaines. Pour s'acquitter de son rôle de principal acteur de l'élaboration de politiques, l'Agence a mené de vastes recherches et a mobilisé ses partenaires, notamment les gouvernements provinciaux, les dirigeants d'entreprise et les universités, pour qu'ils travaillent à des solutions stratégiques afin de continuer à renforcer les capacités de développement de la région.

Partenariat pour

**l'investissement au Canada
atlantique : Améliorer
les possibilités à l'échelle
mondiale**

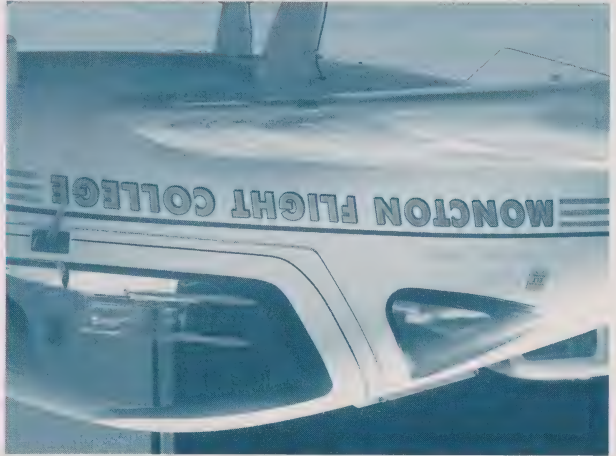
Ce changement de cap
stratégique a mené à la

création du Partenariat pour l'investissement au Canada atlantique (PICA), importante mesure quinquennale lancée en 2000 et reconduite en 2005. Le PICA a permis à l'APÉCA de faire des investissements majeurs dans l'innovation, le développement économique des collectivités, le commerce et l'investissement ainsi que l'entrepreneuriat et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires.

Le Budget fédéral de 2005 affectait 590 millions de dollars sur cinq ans (de 2005 à 2010) au renouvellement du PICA. Cette reconduction a permis à l'APÉCA de poursuivre ses investissements dans les domaines suivants :

- partenariats avec les secteurs public et privé pour favoriser l'innovation, le commerce et les investissements;
- entrepreneuriat et perfectionnement des compétences en affaires;
- développement des collectivités.

Ces investissements aident la région de l'Atlantique non seulement à relever ses défis économiques et à saisir les possibilités qui se présentent sur les marchés mondiaux, mais aussi à participer à des initiatives nationales telles que le programme Chantiers Canada, l'initiative Réaliser le potentiel des sciences et de la technologie au profit du Canada et les stratégies mondiales sur le commerce.



pour des projets d'innovation et pour la réalisation d'études, tout en accordant une aide aux organismes non commerciaux.

L'Agence a ensuite lancé le Programme de COOPÉRATION pour compléter le programme Action. Cette nouvelle mesure visait à renforcer les investissements effectués antérieurement dans l'infrastructure de développement de base et ciblait des investissements et des initiatives stratégiques. Comme son nom l'indique, le Programme de COOPÉRATION était fondé sur des accords de collaboration entre le gouvernement fédéral et les provinces. Cette mise en commun des ressources et des efforts a facilité l'élaboration de stratégies d'investissement axées sur un objectif commun – la création d'un climat économique propice à la croissance des entreprises et des industries dans la région de l'Atlantique.

Tendre la main aux collectivités et mettre l'accent sur l'innovation

Au début des années 1990, plusieurs forces sociales et économiques ont donné à l'APECA l'occasion de revoir son approche à l'égard du développement régional. Face à l'effondrement de l'industrie de la pêche du poisson de fond dans l'Atlantique ainsi qu'à la fermeture et à la rationalisation de plusieurs bases des Forces canadiennes, l'APECA s'est tournée vers les collectivités et a accepté un nouveau rôle, celui de les aider à se mobiliser de façon ciblée pour s'adapter aux nouvelles réalités et réagir à la perte soudaine et souvent traumatisante d'emplois et de possibilités à l'échelle locale.

Grâce à des mesures telles que le programme Diversi-pêches et le Fonds d'adaptation des collectivités touchées par la fermeture des bases militaires, l'APECA a travaillé de concert avec les collectivités touchées afin d'élaborer et de financer des initiatives de développement économique durable axées sur les possibilités existant dans les collectivités mêmes. Ce travail de concertation a permis aux collectivités de faire le point sur ce qu'elles avaient à offrir, de miser sur leurs forces et de relever certains de leurs défis, le tout dans le but d'aller de l'avant de manière constructive. L'APECA a aussi entrepris d'exécuter le Programme des travaux d'infrastructure du Canada au nom du gouvernement fédéral et a investi dans des projets d'infrastructures de base à frais partagés avec les gouvernements provinciaux et les municipalités. À cette époque, l'Agence assumait la responsabilité du Programme de développement des collectivités et appuyait un réseau de 41 corporations au bénéfice du développement communautaire qui prêtaient du capital et offraient des services-conseils aux PME des régions rurales de l'Atlantique.

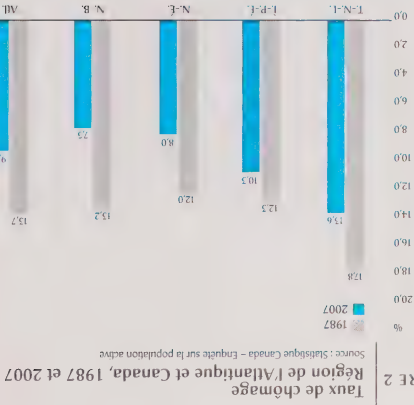
À cette époque, il est devenu évident que la mondialisation et la montée de l'économie du savoir étaient en train de pousser la région de l'Atlantique vers ce que l'économiste Michael Porter et d'autres ont appelé « le nouveau paradigme de la compétitivité ». Dans cette nouvelle économie, la prospérité passait non plus par la main-d'œuvre ou les ressources naturelles, mais bien par la productivité.

En 1987, l'APBECA a instauré une nouvelle mesure – le programme Action – pour les entreprises de la région de l'Atlantique. Ce programme qui portait sur l'entrepreneurs, mettait l'accent sur le démarrage et l'expansion des petites et moyennes entreprises. Qualité de « simple, direct et souple », le programme Action visait à fournir de l'aide pour la création, la modernisation et l'expansion d'entreprises. Il devait également fournir un soutien pour la mise au point de nouveaux produits,

Les premières années : Développement de l'entrepreneurs

Pendant ses premières années d'existence, l'APBECA a concentré ses efforts presque exclusivement sur le développement du secteur privé. Elle a conçu une stratégie complète qui visait à mieux faire connaître l'entrepreneurs comme option de carrière viable et à mettre en place une série de services de soutien aux petites entreprises, notamment de la formation, des services de consultation et de la recherche. Cette stratégie a été couronnée de succès et a servi de modèle à d'autres pays. En 1996, l'APBECA et l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques ont publié un document intitulé *Mise en œuvre d'une stratégie de promotion de l'entrepreneurs au Canada : Le cas de la région de l'Atlantique*.

La figure 2 révèle une réduction marquée du taux de chômage dans la région, ce qui témoigne d'une grande amélioration du bien-être et de la prospérité économique de la population des provinces de l'Atlantique. En effet, le taux de chômage enregistré en 2007 était inférieur de 4,5 points de pourcentage à celui de 1987. L'écart entre le taux de chômage de la région de l'Atlantique et celui du Canada dans son ensemble est passé de 4,9 % à 3,2 %.



La figure 1 révèle que le revenu réel par habitant dans la région était de 36,2 % supérieur en 2007 à ce qu'il était en 1987, ce qui dépasse de loin l'augmentation moyenne de 24,3 % à l'échelle nationale.

À l'époque de la création de l'APBECA, le Canada atlantique affichait un taux de chômage de 14 % et avait pour seule perspective des industries primaires en déclin. Comme le montrent les graphiques du présent rapport, le rendement économique enregistré dans les 20 dernières années témoigne manifestement d'une nette amélioration de la situation économique de la population de l'Atlantique.

Chapitre 1

Croître avec la population de l'Atlantique

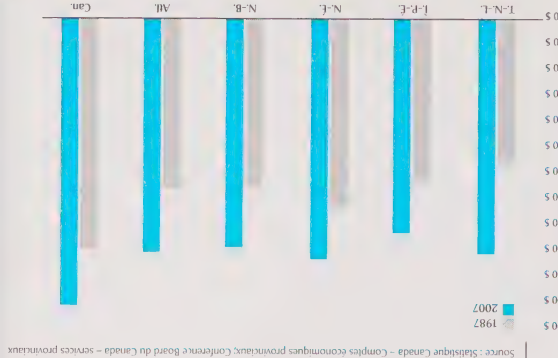
En 2007, l'APECA a célébré 20 années de services aux citoyens des provinces de l'Atlantique. À l'aube de sa troisième décennie d'existence, l'Agence peut s'enorgueillir d'un dossier impressionnant à titre de

mandataire du gouvernement du Canada pour l'exécution des programmes de développement économique au Nouveau-Brunswick, à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, en Nouvelle-Écosse ainsi qu'à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador.

Transformation de l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique

Dans les 20 dernières années, les provinces de l'Atlantique ont subi une transformation. La région a développé une nouvelle culture entrepreneuriale qui est de plus en plus innovatrice et tournée vers l'extérieur. Si l'APECA ne peut prendre à elle seule tout le mérite de cette métamorphose, il ne fait aucun doute qu'elle a joué un rôle très important dans ce processus.

FIGURE 1 Revenu gagné réel par habitant Région de l'Atlantique, 1987 et 2007



Cette année, l'Agence célèbre

20 années de service.

Depuis plus de 20 ans, l'APECA

constitue un apport positif dans

la vie des habitants du Canada

atlantique...

• Elle aide nos entrepreneurs à

démarrer leur entreprise et à

prendre de l'expansion...

• Elle aide nos entreprises à

accroître leur productivité

et à adopter de nouvelles

technologies...

• Elle renforce l'infrastructure

de nos collectivités...

• De plus, elle apporte son

soutien aux jeunes.

Vingt ans plus tard, l'Agence

est reconnue comme étant

un outil de croissance et de

développement... Elle a une

excellente réputation en ce qui

concerne la collaboration avec

ses partenaires.

L'honorable Peter Mackay

Ministre de la Défense nationale

et ministre de l'APECA

Octobre 2007

La section 2 – Un mode d'organisation axé sur les résultats décrit les activités de l'Agence dans les secteurs stratégiques du développement des entreprises, du développement des collectivités ainsi que des politiques, de la défense des intérêts et de la coordination. Le secteur Développement des entreprises a une large portée et comprend l'innovation, le commerce et l'investissement, l'entrepreneuriat et le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires ainsi que l'élargissement du bassin d'entreprises dans la région. La section 2 se termine par un examen prospectif des défis à relever pour que l'APECA respecte son engagement continu à l'égard du développement économique de la région de l'Atlantique.

Le site Web de l'APECA fournit des **renseignements supplémentaires** sur le rendement économique des provinces de l'Atlantique au cours de la période quinquennale, une analyse des impacts de l'APECA ainsi que le programme de gestion de l'APECA. Consulter le site <http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca>.



Introduction

La création de l'APECA a été autorisée par la *Loi organique de 1987 sur le Canada atlantique*, qui, après avoir reçu la sanction royale le 18 août 1987, est entrée en vigueur le 15 septembre 1987. La partie I prévoit la création de l'APECA, et la partie II, celle de la Société d'expansion du Cap-Breton (SECB), qui fait partie du portefeuille du ministre de l'APECA.

Conformément au paragraphe 21(2) de la *Loi*, le président de l'Agence doit présenter au ministre responsable de l'APECA un rapport quinquennal sur les activités de l'Agence. Le ministre est tenu de déposer ce rapport au Parlement.

Le présent rapport vise la période du 1^{er} avril 2003 au 31 mars 2008. Dans certains cas, la périodicité de l'information sur le rendement est tributaire de la disponibilité des données issues de sources externes. Il se peut donc que les renseignements fournis couvrent la période quinquennale la plus récente. Par exemple, les données de Statistique Canada qui ont servi à la comparaison des résultats chez les clients de l'APECA et chez les autres entreprises visent la période se terminant en 2005. Il s'agit du quatrième rapport du genre à être présenté depuis la création de l'Agence. Le rapport est divisé en deux grandes sections :

La section 1 – Impact de l'APECA sur deux décennies présente un aperçu de la façon dont l'APECA a contribué à transformer l'économie des provinces de l'Atlantique au cours des 20 dernières années. Cette section explique également en quoi le rôle de l'APECA a changé depuis 1987 et quels ont été les effets de ce rôle accru sur le développement des collectivités et des entreprises ainsi que l'innovation dans chacune des quatre provinces de l'Atlantique.

félicitations pour les améliorations globales qu'elle a apportées à son programme de gestion.

Pratiques exemplaires en gestion des subventions et des contributions

En juin 2006, le président du Conseil du Trésor du Canada a chargé un groupe d'experts indépendant de formuler des recommandations pour accroître l'efficacité des programmes de subventions et de contributions tout en assurant une plus grande responsabilisation. Ce groupe a cité l'APECA comme exemple. L'Agence met toujours l'accent sur l'excellence en matière de service à la clientèle, et le groupe d'experts indépendant l'a reconnue comme étant un ministère d'avant-garde relativement aux améliorations, puisqu'elle est passée d'une approche axée sur les projets à une approche axée sur le client, a rationalisé ses processus et s'est dotée d'outils informatisés pour mieux servir sa clientèle.

Perspectives d'avenir

Les priorités de l'APECA reflètent les objectifs et les principes d'*Avantage Canada*, cadre économique global du gouvernement du Canada qui repose sur cinq grands avantages. Le mandat de l'Agence s'articule surtout autour de trois d'entre eux : l'entrepreneursip, le savoir et l'infrastructure.

Malgré de récents progrès, la région de l'Atlantique a encore des défis à relever pour relever le niveau de vie. Les provinces de l'Atlantique demeurent l'une des régions les plus rurales du Canada, et elles se caractérisent par un niveau de population stagnant, en raison principalement d'un exode important. Cependant, les taux de chômage n'ont jamais été aussi faibles en 30 ans. Cette amélioration a amené l'APECA à changer de cap : au lieu d'aider les entreprises à créer des emplois, elle cherche désormais à stimuler la croissance de la productivité, la compétitivité et l'augmentation des revenus gagnés.

L'APECA met aujourd'hui l'accent sur la recherche-développement, l'intégration des technologies, le perfectionnement des compétences en affaires ainsi que le commerce et les investissements. De plus, elle entend favoriser le développement stratégique équilibré des milieux urbains et ruraux et jouer encore plus activement son rôle de défenseur des intérêts.



En partenariat avec Transports Canada et les quatre provinces de l'Atlantique, l'Agence élabore actuellement une stratégie visant à concrétiser le concept de Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique. Les portes d'entrée et les corridors commerciaux forment une infrastructure de transport d'importance nationale. La Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique pourrait devenir le moteur de nouveaux investissements dans la région et donne aux provinces de l'Atlantique l'occasion de tirer parti d'une intensification des échanges internationaux.

Le développement des collectivités est considéré comme un moyen important de favoriser la diversification de l'économie dans les provinces de l'Atlantique. Cette approche à l'égard du développement des collectivités repose sur le principe voulant que la meilleure façon d'aborder les problèmes des collectivités, comme le chômage et l'instabilité économique, consiste à adopter un processus holistique et participatif. Grâce au Fonds des collectivités innovatrices et à son prédécesseur, le Fonds d'investissement stratégique dans les collectivités, l'APÉCA a investi au-delà de 316 millions de dollars dans plus de 900 projets communautaires. Ces investissements ont eu un effet de levier : ils ont amené d'autres sources à investir 359 millions de dollars de plus. En outre, les corporations au bénéfice du développement communautaire ont consenti plus de 9 000 prêts totalisant 257 millions de dollars à des entreprises de leurs collectivités respectives, qui ont engendré des investissements et des opérations de financement de 262 millions de dollars supplémentaires dans le secteur privé.

L'Agence favorise les retombées industrielles régionales et aide les entreprises de la région de l'Atlantique à participer aux activités d'approvisionnement du gouvernement fédéral. L'Agence met notamment l'accent sur les grands projets de l'État qui peuvent engendrer des retombées pour la région. Dans les cinq dernières années, les entreprises de la région de l'Atlantique ont participé à d'importants projets de l'État qui ont donné lieu à des retombées industrielles régionales de plus d'un milliard de dollars.

Chef de file dans le domaine de la gestion

Le portefeuille du Conseil du Trésor évalue chaque année le Cadre de responsabilisation de gestion (CRG) des ministères fédéraux, et il a souligné le rendement de l'Agence en la matière. Les évaluations annuelles du CRG portent sur les structures de gestion et les capacités des ministères fédéraux. Ces deux dernières années, l'APÉCA a été classée parmi les chefs de file du gouvernement du Canada, et elle a reçu des

L'APECA a amené d'autres sources à faire des investissements de plus de 245 millions de dollars.

Le renforcement de l'innovation et la commercialisation des sciences et de la technologie sont essentiels à une croissance économique durable. L'APECA sait que les universités de la région possèdent de solides capacités en recherche-développement et qu'un partenariat avec le secteur privé peut mener à de plus grandes possibilités de commercialisation.

Springboard Atlantique est un exemple d'un tel partenariat. Le réseau, créé en 2004 par l'Association des universités de l'Atlantique, a pour mission de stimuler la commercialisation des résultats de la recherche universitaire. Voici un aperçu de ses réalisations :

- le nombre de professionnels du transfert technologique, d'agents de liaison avec l'industrie et d'autres spécialistes dont les activités appuient cet effort a triplé;
- le nombre de divulgations, de brevets et d'accords de commercialisation a doublé, et il en va de même pour les recettes;
- les budgets de recherche des membres du réseau Springboard est passé de 225 à 280 millions de dollars.

L'Agence travaille à créer des possibilités de croissance économique dans la région en faisant la promotion des exportations et en cherchant à attirer les investissements étrangers. La stratégie commerciale de l'APECA relativement à l'économie mondiale consiste en l'amélioration du rendement à l'exportation de la région de l'Atlantique grâce à l'augmentation de la capacité des petites et moyennes entreprises (PME) de créer des activités et de les développer. L'exportation offre aux PME de nombreux avantages concrets sur le plan des résultats nets, par exemple des ventes accrues, des profits plus intéressants et une réduction de la dépendance à l'égard des marchés traditionnels. La taille relativement restreinte de la population de la région limite les débouchés commerciaux qui peuvent être offerts par les marchés étrangers.

De 2003 à 2007, dans l'exercice de son travail de promotion et de renforcement des capacités d'exportation, l'Agence a dirigé sept missions d'Équipe Canada Atlantique, auxquelles ont participé plus de 230 PME de la région. Ces missions, qui étaient axées sur le commerce et l'investissement, ont engendré au-delà de dix millions de dollars en ventes à l'exportation immédiates.

L'APECA joue un rôle important dans le renforcement des partenariats et la mobilisation des intervenants à l'égard des priorités du gouvernement.

L'Atlantique font preuve d'innovation et sont tournés vers les marchés étrangers comme jamais auparavant.

Points saillants pour la période de 2003 à 2008

L'APCA gère ses opérations conformément aux priorités stratégiques, lesquelles reflètent :

- les résultats de recherches et d'analyses stratégiques;
- les résultats d'un examen et d'une évaluation courants de l'efficacité de ses programmes;
- un développement permanent avec d'autres intervenants de la région;
- les priorités et les grandes orientations du gouvernement du Canada.

L'orientation stratégique de l'APCA à l'appui de son mandat est assurée par le biais d'activités qui soutiennent ses trois résultats stratégiques :

entreprises concurrentielles et durables au Canada atlantique, particulièrement celles de petite et moyenne taille, dynamisme et viabilité des collectivités du Canada atlantique, et politiques et programmes qui visent à renforcer l'économie de la région de l'Atlantique.

L'innovation, le renforcement de la capacité d'innovation par la recherche-développement et l'intégration des technologies sont essentiels à la productivité et à la compétitivité de la région.

L'Agence a continué de favoriser la

recherche-développement grâce au Fonds d'innovation de l'Atlantique (FIA). Ce programme a été reconduit en 2005 et assorti d'un budget supplémentaire de 300 millions de dollars. De 2003 à 2008, quatre appels de propositions concurrentiels ont été lancés. Plus de 200 partenariats entre le secteur privé, le milieu universitaire et les établissements de recherche ont été créés pour faciliter l'exécution conjointe de projets de recherche-développement. L'APCA a approuvé au total 144 projets évalués à 790 millions de dollars, et elle y a investi 357 millions de dollars.

Depuis 2003, l'APCA a également financé plus de 230 projets de recherche-développement en versant plus de 70 millions de dollars en aide financière remboursable sous conditions. Elle a contribué pour au-delà de 21 millions de dollars à plus de 85 projets d'intégration de technologies. Ce soutien financier de

Incidence sur la croissance économique

- Pour chaque dollar investi directement dans des entreprises par l'entremise des programmes de l'Agence, le PIB de la région s'est accru de plus de 7 \$.
- Il est estimé que le PIB total de la région de l'Atlantique était de 1,2 milliard de dollars de plus en 2007 qu'il ne l'aurait été en l'absence de l'aide directe que l'APCA a accordée aux entreprises. De 2003 à 2007, le soutien direct de 622 millions de dollars de l'Agence aux entreprises a engendré des recettes fiscales de plus de 865 millions de dollars.
- Le total de l'emploi brut était plus élevé de presque 25 000 en 2007 qu'il ne l'aurait été sans le soutien direct accordé aux entreprises.

Résumé

En 2007, l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique (APECA) a célébré 20 ans de prestation de services à la population de la région de l'Atlantique. Au cours de ces deux décennies, les provinces de l'Atlantique ont subi une transformation. La région a développé une nouvelle culture entrepreneuriale, une culture de plus en plus innovatrice et tournée vers l'extérieur, et l'APECA y a joué un rôle crucial. En s'adaptant rapidement aux forces sociales et économiques qui exerçaient leur influence sur la région, l'APECA a aidé les entreprises et les collectivités des provinces de l'Atlantique à se renforcer et à soutenir la concurrence mondiale.

L'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique (APECA) travaille à créer des possibilités de croissance économique au Canada atlantique en aidant les entreprises à devenir plus concurrentielles, plus innovatrices et plus productives, en travaillant avec les collectivités à développer et à diversifier leur économie et en faisant la promotion des atouts de la région.

La région de l'Atlantique jouit d'une économie forte depuis quelques années. Cependant, elle doit faire face à de nouveaux défis. La concurrence exercée à l'étranger par les fabricants à faible coût et le taux de change élevé mettent à rude épreuve l'assise manufacturière déjà limitée et les industries saisonnières de la région. Si les industries primaires continuent de sous-tendre une partie de l'économie, on assiste tout de même à une diversification, grâce à la production de nouveaux biens et services à valeur ajoutée et à l'apparition de nouveaux secteurs du savoir dans le paysage économique. L'APECA a appuyé le développement de plusieurs de ces secteurs à l'heure où ils cherchaient des possibilités de croissance et des débouchés à valeur ajoutée.

Au cours des cinq dernières années, l'APECA a encouragé un nombre accru d'entreprises à innover et à faire de la recherche-développement, elle a fait la promotion de l'exportation et des investissements étrangers, et elle a aidé les Canadiens et les Canadiennes de la région de l'Atlantique à acquérir les compétences nécessaires pour réussir en affaires au XXI^e siècle. Grâce à ses efforts, les citoyens des provinces de

Table des matières

Rapport quinquennal présenté au Parlement

Résumé	i
Introduction	1
Section 1 – Impact de l’APÉCA sur deux décennies	3
Chapitre 1 : Croître avec la population de l’Atlantique	3
Chapitre 2 : Faire fond sur nos réalisations	7
Section 2 – Un mode d’organisation axé sur les résultats	19
Chapitre 3 : L’APÉCA et son mandat	22
Chapitre 4 : Développement des entreprises	26
4.1 Aperçu	26
4.2 Innovation	30
4.3 Commerce et investissement	39
4.4 Investissements étrangers dans les provinces de l’Atlantique	43
4.5 Entrepreneurship et perfectionnement des compétences en affaires	44
4.6 Continuum de financement	49
4.7 Accès à l’information relative aux affaires	51
Chapitre 5 : Développement des collectivités	54
5.1 Aperçu	54
5.2 Ressources pour le développement des collectivités	54
5.3 Développement des entreprises communautaires	55
5.4 Investissement dans les collectivités	58
5.5 Communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire	62
5.6 Développement économique des Autochtones	64
5.7 Programmes d’infrastructure	65
5.8 Mesures d’intervention spéciale	66
Chapitre 6 : Politiques, défense des intérêts et coordination	68
6.1 Aperçu	68
6.2 Politiques	70
6.3 Défense des intérêts	71
6.4 Coordination	75
Chapitre 7 : Perspectives d’avenir	77

Message du ministre d'Etat



La région de l'Atlantique était très différente en 1987, année où l'APECA s'est fixé un objectif aussi ambitieux que stimulant : renforcer l'économie des provinces de l'Atlantique en stimulant l'esprit d'entreprise pour favoriser la création d'emplois stables et bien rémunérés.

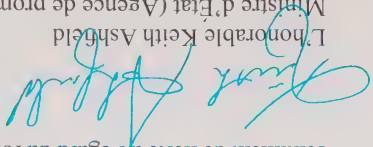
Vingt ans plus tard, l'APECA est considérée comme un moteur d'innovation, de croissance et de développement. Elle travaille de façon constructive avec ses nombreux partenaires afin d'exécuter la stratégie du gouvernement fédéral en matière de développement économique régional et sectoriel.

Le présent rapport quinquennal porte sur les dossiers de l'APECA pour la

- Pour chaque dollar que l'Agence a investi directement dans les entreprises, le PIB de la région s'est accru de plus de sept dollars.
- Les analystes estiment que le PIB des provinces de l'Atlantique est supérieur de 1,2 milliard de dollars à ce qu'il aurait été sans l'aide de l'APECA.
- Le soutien direct de l'Agence aux entreprises a contribué à engendrer des recettes fiscales de plus de 865 millions de dollars.
- La productivité des petites et moyennes entreprises (PME) aidées par l'APECA a augmenté en moyenne de 6,4 % par année.
- L'Agence a contribué à la création de retombées régionales de plus de un milliard de dollars pour les industries du Canada atlantique.

En veillant à l'exécution de son mandat, l'APECA continuera d'appuyer le démarrage et la croissance des PME, de stimuler la commercialisation des résultats de la recherche-développement locale et l'accroissement des investissements dans la région, d'aider les entreprises à exporter et de soutenir la promotion des collectivités durables ainsi que la croissance de secteurs d'activité nouveaux ou existants.

En tant que ministre d'Etat, je partage avec le personnel de l'Agence un sentiment de fierté à l'égard du rôle que l'APECA tient au Canada atlantique.



L'honorable Keith Ashfield

Ministre d'Etat (Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique)

Messsage du ministre

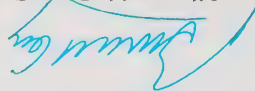
Depuis plus de deux décennies, l'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique (APECA) travaille de concert avec la population de l'Atlantique à bâtir des collectivités fortes et une économie régionale diversifiée. Vingt ans après que le Premier ministre Brian Mulroney a créé l'APECA, l'Agence continue à jouer un rôle primordial dans l'avenir de la région.

Les réalisations de l'APECA pour ce qui est de développer une économie régionale plus innovatrice, productive et concurrentielle sont directement liées à l'objectif fixé par notre gouvernement, soit de bâtir un Canada prospère et

uni. L'Agence est résolue à encourager l'innovation et à contribuer à la croissance stratégique d'industries telles que l'aquaculture, les sciences de la vie ainsi que l'aérospatiale et la défense. De plus, l'APECA continuera à promouvoir l'accroissement des exportations sur les marchés émergents et le développement de la Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique.

L'APECA est un important organisme de développement économique régional et elle est toujours attentive aux besoins et tournée vers l'avenir pour ce qui est de définir des politiques et d'exécuter des programmes qui visent à relever les défis économiques en constante évolution, à cerner les nouvelles possibilités de développement et à soutenir les efforts déployés au Canada atlantique en vue de réaliser le plein potentiel de la région.

C'est donc avec grand plaisir que je dépose le présent rapport quinquennal au Parlement pour rendre compte de la période de 2003 à 2008.



L'honorable Peter G. MacKay

Ministre de la Défense nationale et ministre de la Porte d'entrée de l'Atlantique





Agence de
promotion économique
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Rapport quinquennal présenté au Parlement 2003-2008





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